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# **TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIALISM IN BRITAIN**

by  
Duncan Bowie



Socialist History Society

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*By Duncan Bowie*

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# TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIALISM IN BRITAIN

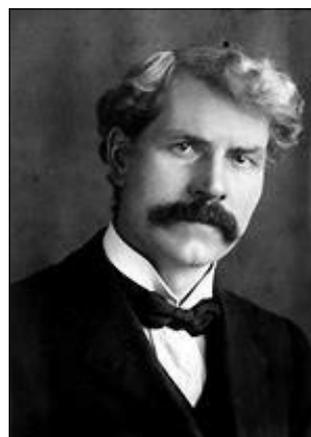
## Introduction

These columns were originally published in Chartist magazine, commencing in 2013. They provide in chronological order a selection of key socialist writings from a range of traditions, including both well-known authors and some who are less well known. Each extract is introduced by a brief biography of the author or publishing organisation. The preceding fifty columns, were published between 2005 and 2013 and published as a collection by the SHS in 2014 – see the list in the appendix.

## OUR HISTORY 51

### Ramsay MacDonald: *Socialism and Society* (1905)

Ramsay MacDonald was the first Labour Prime Minister and led the Labour administrations of 1924 and 1929-1931. His decision to dissolve the Labour government in the financial crisis and serve as Prime Minister in the Conservative dominated National government of 1931-1935 and his status as leader of the 'great betrayal' has meant that labour historians overlook his critical role in developing the Labour Party as the main opposition to the Conservatives and as a party accepted by the electorate as 'fit to govern'. Political historians and theorists also overlook MacDonald's theoretical contribution.



Ramsay MacDonald

MacDonald authored some sixteen books, and edited the ILP's *Socialist Review*, which was the main theoretical journal of English socialism both before and after the First World War, as well as editing the ILP's Socialist Library of theoretical works by European socialist thinkers. MacDonald opposed the Boer War and the First World War, in the latter case having to give up the party leadership. He was a leading member of the Second International.

The illegitimate son of a Lossiemouth ploughman and a farmworker, he was self-taught; an active member of the Fabian Society in Bristol; before moving to London and becoming active in the ILP, the SDF and living in a communal house run by Davidson's Fellowship of the New Life. In the mid-1890s he became the ILP's leading propagandist, before becoming secretary of the Labour Representation committee in 1900 and MP for Leicester in 1906 under the Lib-Lab pact arrangement he had negotiated with the Liberal chief whip, Herbert Gladstone. He was chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party from 1911 to 1914 and from 1922 to 1931. MacDonald was not a Marxist but instead believed in the organic development of a

socialist society. He was a moderate and opponent of syndicalism and direct action. He was however a collectivist and supported the nationalisation of land and believed that capital should be owned by the community and that production and distribution required social organisation. He was also a strong supporter of nationalist movements in the colonies and wrote books on the British empire and Indian nationalism.

*"Society in this country, with our free institutions and machinery which can respond to the least impulse of the popular will so soon as the people care to express themselves, progresses by an assimilation of ideas and circumstances. Individuals formulate ideas, Society gradually assimilates them, and gradually the assimilation shows its effect on the social structure. The laws of organic assimilation apply in a specially simple way to our conditions, our politics and our parties; and it is the operation of these non-catastrophic and non-revolutionary laws which today causing social unsettlement and calling for political readjustment."*

*"One of the assumptions which bear of the fabric of socialist thought and expectation is that as Society approaches in its organisation to the Socialist condition, the individual will respond to the moral responsibilities which that condition will lay upon him. The individual is in tune with his Society, and for that reason Socialism can purify the gross, blundering thing today called individualism into an impulse which will seek to express itself and find its liberty in social conduct through service to the community. Hence it is that the key idea to the understanding of Socialism is not a wiping-out but a transformation, not a re-creation but a fulfilment."*

## **OUR HISTORY 52**

### **Philip Snowden: *Socialism and Individualism* (1905)**

The fact that Snowden joined Ramsay Macdonald's National Government in 1931 has overshadowed Snowden's central role in the propaganda of the Independent Labour Party. A devout Methodist and teetotaler from the West Riding of Yorkshire, brought up in Liberal politics, he joined the ILP on its foundation in 1893, becoming one of its most popular speakers, showing an oratorical style which used religious terminology to promote the socialist crusade – one of his lectures was called 'The Christ that is to Be'. A member of the town council and school board in Keighley, Snowden joined the ILP national executive and served as chairman between 1903 and 1906. Elected to parliament for Blackburn in 1906, he became financial spokesman for the



Philip Snowden

Labour Party, was consulted by Lloyd George on his 1909 budget and wrote a series of books and pamphlets on Labour's financial policy and advocating a Living Wage.

Snowden was a strong supporter of parliamentary democracy and in 1913 wrote a pamphlet opposing syndicalism. Like Macdonald, he opposed British participation in the First World War, wrote *Dreadnoughts and Dividends* opposing the arms trade and lost his seat in the 1918 election. Returning to Parliament in 1922, he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1924 and 1929 Labour governments. Snowden's wife Ethel was also a prominent ILP activist and writer, and the author of *The Woman Socialist*, *Through Bolshevik Russia* and *A Political Pilgrim in Europe*.

*"Socialism, by making land and machinery the common property of all, and making these instruments to supply material needs, will completely change the business and object of life. Socialism will change human nature. The opportunity makes the man. Socialism will take away the desire for accumulated riches. Today men struggle for riches because the possession of riches gives the command of those things men most desire – social position honour, independence, freedom from arduous toil and the horror of poverty and starvation. But, under Socialism the possession of riches will cease to be a ruling passion, for honest labour will be a guarantee against want, and riches will no longer be the passport to social position. Under such conditions the possession of riches will be a superfluous burden which no sane man will wish to bear. Crimes of property must inevitably disappear."*

*"And Socialism will create a condition of things favourable to the development of the higher type of individuality. The organisation of industry, the saving of the present waste of competition, will reduce the labour of supplying the physical needs to the narrowest limits, leaving abundant leisure for the satisfaction of individual desires. And the conditions under which this necessary work will be done will be healthy, pleasant and elevating. Men and women will be educated to take an intelligent interest in their work. Society will have discovered that it is best for society and for the individual to put him to the work he can best do, and this will transform his labour from a drudgery to perpetual joy."*

## OUR HISTORY 53

### Zelda Kahan: *Principles of Socialism* (1908)

Zelda Kahan was one of the leaders of the internationalist faction within the Social Democratic Federation. Working with colleagues such as her fellow Russian exile, Theodore Rothstein, Joe Fineberg and E C Fairchild, she opposed Hyndman's imperialist and pro-war position. Together with her husband, W P Coates, she published a series of books on Russia and the Anglo-Russian relationship, including *Armed Intervention in Russia 1918-22* (1935), *From Tsardom to the Soviet Constitution* (1938) and *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations* (1944) for which Lloyd George contributed a forward, as well as studies of the First and Second Five Year Plans, two books on Soviet relationships with Finland and the Baltic and a volume on Soviets in Central Asia.



Zelda Kahan

Zelda Kahan, who was Jewish, was born in Lithuania, coming to England at the age of ten. Her brother, Boris, was secretary of the Hackney SDF. Zelda represented the Hackney branch on the executive of the British Socialist Party (as the SDF had become) in 1912 and married William Coates in 1912. Coates was the BSP national organiser, who became secretary of the Hands Off Russia committee. Zelda and her husband later joined the Communist Party. Theodore Rothstein, the leading London based Bolshevik, and anti-colonialist historian, was brother-in-law to the Kahans. In 1909, at the time of the scare over increasing German naval power, Kahan attacked Hyndman for allying himself with the 'jingo naval scaremongers'.

In 1911, Kahan proposed a resolution at the SDF annual conference opposing armaments. The resolution was defeated but split the SDF into two, with the old guard of Hyndman and Harry Quelch retaining control. Lenin commented that 'Zelda Kahan was right when she said that never had English social democracy so disgraced itself as now – even men like Quelch desert to the side of the chauvinists.' In 1912, the internationalists led by Kahan won a narrow majority on the BSP executive to declare that 'so far as workers are concerned there is nothing to choose between German and British Imperialism and aggression.' This was then rescinded in February 1913, which led to Kahan's resignation.

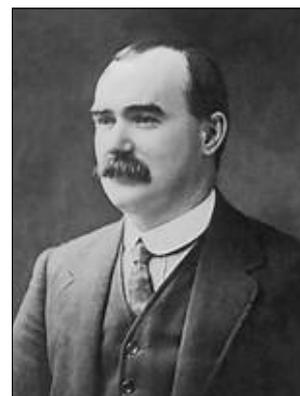
*"We have seen what private enterprise and competition have led to. Quite against the will of its supporters, competition is well-nigh a thing of the past. We are fast approaching a state of pure collectivism so far as production is concerned, but unfortunately the manner of distribution of the wealth is anything but collectivist.*

*Here private ownership steps in, and a small minority appropriates what the majority produce. You see the question is no longer for or against competition. It is firstly shall we perfect the collective method of production already largely established? Secondly, shall we collectively own what we collectively produce? Common sense and common justice can give but one reply. But here comes the all-important question, how are we to do it. Well, if you have made up your mind to do it, there will not be much difficulty... What is to prevent a Parliament composed of representatives of your own class from passing a law by which the profits from the concerns should go into the national coffers instead of into private hands?... The workpeople would now be the employees of the State, and if only you and they used their votes aright, the profits would now be used for raising the quality of the things produced, raising the wages of the people employed, and for initiating some very pressing social reforms "*

## **OUR HISTORY 54**

### **James Connolly: *Socialism Made Easy* (1909)**

James Connolly was an Irish republican socialist. Connolly was born in Edinburgh – his father was a manure carrier for the Edinburgh Corporation. Enlisting in the army at the age of fourteen, he left military service in 1889 and mentored by the socialist poet, John Leslie, he joined the Social Democratic Federation becoming Scottish correspondent of *Justice*. In Scotland the SDF and Socialist League united as the Scottish Socialist Federation. In 1894, Connolly became secretary of the Edinburgh branch of the newly founded ILP. In 1896, Connolly was appointed paid organiser of the Dublin socialist club and established the Irish Socialist Republican Party, combining Irish nationalism with socialism. Connolly lived in America between 1902 and 1910, where he was active in De Leon's Socialist Labour Party and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) as well as establishing an Irish Socialist Federation among Irish-American workers. *Socialism Made Easy* was originally published in Chicago in 1908, to be followed in 1910 by *Labour in Irish History*, a Marxist analysis of Irish history. Returning to Ireland in 1910, Connolly resumed his previous role as leader of the Irish republican socialists – he took over from James Larkin as secretary of the Irish TGWU when Larkin went to America. In 1912 he founded the Irish Labour Party. When the Ulster Protestants formed a Volunteer Army to resist the implementation of the 1912 Home Rule Act, Connolly formed an Irish Citizens Army. This army was to participate in the Easter Rising of 1916, with Connolly to be vice president of the provisional



James Connolly

government, with Padraic Pearse as president. The leadership of the Irish volunteers did not support the uprising and Connolly's small band of rebels was isolated and soon defeated by the British army. Connolly was wounded in the fighting and executed on 12 May 1916.

*"If you belong to the working class your duty is clear. Your union must be perfected until it embraces everyone who toils in the service of your employer, or as a unit in your industry. The fact that your employers find it necessary to secure the services of any individual worker is or ought to be that individual's highest and best title to be a member of your union. If the boss needs him you need him more. You need the open union and the closed shop if you ever mean to control the means and conditions of life. And as the champion of your class upon the political field, as the eve- active propagandist of the idea of the working class, as the representative and embodiment of the social principle of the future, you need the Socialist Labour Party. The Future of Labour is bound up with the harmonious development of those twin expressions of the forces of progress: the Freedom of Labour will be born of their happily consummated union."*

## **OUR HISTORY 55**

### **Fred Jowett: *What is the Use of Parliament?* (1909)**

Fred Jowett was the leader of the ILP in Bradford. He had been a member of the Socialist League and then the Labour Electoral Association and was also president of the Bradford Labour Church. In 1889 he was elected as the first socialist councillor on Bradford City Council and secretary of the Trades Council from 1893. A member of the national administrative council of the ILP from 1900, he failed to be elected to parliament in the 1900 election but was returned in 1906. He was a columnist in Blatchford's *Clarion*. He was highly critical of parliamentary procedures and of the role of the Labour party leadership within and in 1909 also contributed to the pamphlet



*Fred Jowett*

*Let us Reform the Labour Party*. He argued for the primacy of principle over party tactics and was promoter of the successful resolution at the 1914 Bradford ILP conference that Labour should 'vote on all issues in accordance with the principles for which the Party stands' a resolution Beatrice Webb called impractical. Jowett had a wide range of interests – in 1907 he published a volume in the ILP's *Labour Ideals* series on '*Socialism in the City*' and he also led for Labour on the debates on the 1909 Housing and Town Planning Bill. He was also interested in

foreign policy, supporting Roger Casement's campaign against slave labour in Peru in 1912, was a member of the executive committee of the Union of Democratic Control (of foreign policy) in the war years, was one of the organisers of the pro soviet Leeds convention of June 1917 and in 1920 joined a delegation to Hungary to examine the white terror of Admiral Horthy and the suppression Bela Kun's communists.

In MacDonald's first Labour Government in 1924, Jowett joined the cabinet as First Commissioner of Works, but lost his seat in the 1924 election. He remained active within the ILP and supported their radical 'Socialism in Our Time' programme. He was returned to Parliament in 1929, but this time remained on the backbenches, Lansbury taking his former post. In the 1935 election a split in the Labour ranks, with Jowett as ILP candidate fighting a Labour Party candidate, let in the Conservative. Jowett dies in 1944 at the age of 80. Ten years later his friend Fenner Brockway published a biography of him, *Socialism over Sixty Years*.

*"No school of politicians can justify the present system of conducting the executive basis of State on its merits. .. The present system fosters and maintains a governing class, that is why the ruling classes support it. They think that the aristocracy and the chief persons of the State should govern, in the interests of the people, of course... If State departments were placed under committee control, not only would the system of single Ministerial control go, but the two-Party system would go with it.. As for those who are now Ministers, they might be chairmen of committees, but the powers they would now wield should be vested in the committees over which they preside. In recommending as I do most emphatically, the present system of single Ministerial control, supported as it is by joint Cabinet responsibility, and the substitution in its place of a a system of committee government similar to the system which prevails in county and local government, I am making no unsupported recommendation, though if I were the only one to protest against the present system, I would persist in doing so."*

## OUR HISTORY 56

### **Sydney Olivier: *White Capital and Coloured Labour* (1910)**

Olivier is sometimes referred to as one of the lesser Fabians. He was however the only early British socialist to write on colonial policy. Keir Hardie and MacDonald wrote on Indian nationalism and Macdonald also wrote on Labour and the empire, but it was Olivier who sought to analyse the colonial relationship within its economic context and to challenge assumptions widely held among the early Labour leaders as to the inferiority of the negro race. There is only



Sydney Olivier

one modern biography of Olivier, written by *Chartist's* Frank Lee, and published as *Fabianism and Colonialism* in 1988. Olivier's widow published a memoir with selections from Olivier's writings in 1948. Olivier was secretary of the Fabian Society from 1886 to 1889 and served on the executive committee until 1899. Starting his career as a colonial office official, Olivier served as colonial secretary in British Honduras from 1890 and then as colonial secretary and subsequently as Governor in Jamaica. Between 1913 and 1917, he was permanent secretary to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. Having retired from the civil service, Olivier became Secretary of State for India in MacDonald's 1924 government. Excluded from MacDonald's second government, Olivier became a critic of the government's colonial policy, but served as a member of the Labour Party's advisory committee on imperial questions, under the chairmanship of Leonard Woolf.

*White Capital and Coloured Labour* was published in the ILP's Socialist Library edited by Macdonald and was a serious analysis of what was referred to as 'the race question' focusing on the economic context of colonialism and challenging some of the Darwinian perspectives of racial superiority as the justification for empire, widely held by early socialists including the Webbs as well as by Liberal imperialists. Olivier also published *The Anatomy of African Misery* in 1933, and two books on Jamaica, including one on the Governor Eyre controversy and the Jamaican slave revolt of 1865.

Olivier wrote the chapter on the morality of socialism in the 1889 *Fabian Essays*:

*"Socialist morality .. is only the morality which the conditions of human existence have made necessary, that is only the expression of the external passion of life seeking its satisfaction through the striving of each individual for the freest and fullest activity; that Socialism is but a stage in the unending progression out of the weakness and the ignorance in which society and the individual alike are born, towards the strength and the enlightenment in which they can see and choose their own way forward – from the chaos where morality is not to the consciousness which sees that morality is reason; and to have made some attempt to justify the claim that the cardinal virtue of Socialism is nothing more than Common Sense."*

In *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, he considered the morality and economics of colonialism:

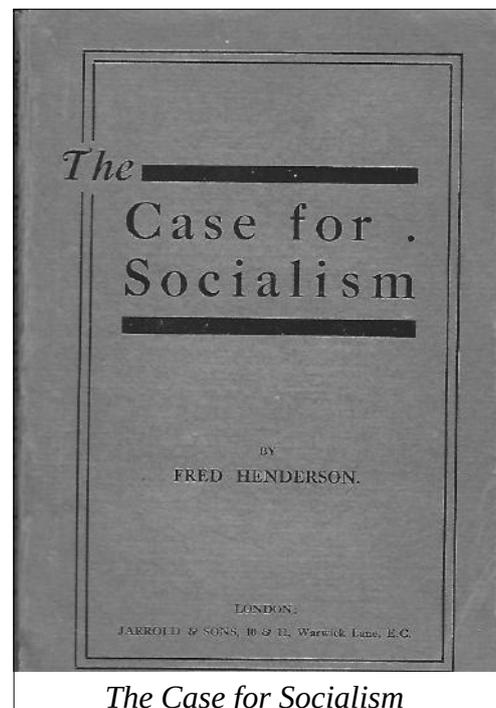
*"The question of relations between black and white is obscured by a mass of prejudice and ignorance and blindness, proportional to the isolating differences in their evolved constitutions. These barriers are not different in kind or in strength from those which once separated neighbouring European tribes..... It is a*

*deplorable but unquestionable fact of experience, and it is the basis of practical democratic conviction in politics and industry, that if you give one average man command over the services of another for his own purposes, he will abuse it. ... The danger of inhumanity is much greater where there is racial distinction. Because this, at best, obscures the human sense of sympathy; but where this obscuration is enhanced by a positive theory of racial incompatibility and inferiority, race prejudice intensifies the tendency to oppression in exploitation. The social claims that are recognized in the fellow white man are expressly denied to exist at all in the black.... No mixed community can attain unity and health if the white man assumes an attitude which stimulates and maintains this alienating suspicion in the black, or where one governing class bases its polity on the short sighted theory that the dividing habits of Race are permanently stronger than the unifying force of Humanity."*

## **OUR HISTORY 57**

### **Fred Henderson: *The Case for Socialism* (1911)**

Fred Henderson was a socialist poet, writer and local activist. Born in Norwich, he moved to London to work for T P O'Connor's radical paper *The Star*. He returned to Norwich in 1886 and formed a branch of the Socialist League. An ethical socialist and member of the Norwich Labour Church, for whom he wrote a pamphlet on *Politics in the Pulpit*, he was a friend of William Morris and Edward Carpenter. In 1887 he was arrested for heckling the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, at a meeting in Norwich and locked up in Norwich gaol, where he was put on the treadmill. The arrest led to questions in Parliament by the radical MP, Cunninghame Graham. On his release he published a book of poems – *Echoes of the coming day* –



*Socialist songs and rhymes* (which has recently been reprinted by the British Library). Henderson was elected to the Norwich Board of Guardians in 1890, and also became associated with John Mahon's Labour Union, but moved back to London, where he founded the Clapham Labour League. He edited a paper *The Labour Leader*, through which he sought to recruit members for a new political party. When the ILP was established in Bradford in 1893, he took the Clapham Labour League into the new organisation. In 1892, sponsored by the Labour Representation League established by the London Trades Council, he was elected to the London

County Council and joined the progressive group. However, in the following year he was found guilty of stealing three shillings from a prostitute, and though protesting his innocence, was forced to resign his seat and served a four months sentence of hard labour.

Returning to Norwich, Henderson worked as a journalist before being elected as the first socialist on Norwich City Council in 1902. He became an alderman in 1923 and Lord Mayor in 1939, serving a total of 55 years on the council, till his death in 1957 at the age of 90. He was a vigorous propagandist, publishing *The Case for Socialism* for the *Clarion* in 1911. This book was reprinted several times – the opening chapter was adopted by the ILP as a statement of the socialist position. Henderson was a libertarian socialist and was also closed to a number of anarchists, including Fred Charles and Charles Mowbray who were also active in the Norwich socialist movement. In the winter of 1913-14, he wrote a series of articles in the *Clarion*, critically discussing guild socialist ideas, concerned that they promoted sectionalism. During the First World War, Henderson was associated with a radical anarchist-leaning bookshop in Charing Cross Road, known as the 'bomb shop'. As well as further volumes of poetry, Henderson published a number of further polemics, focusing on the principles of socialism, and the relationship with the modern consumerist society - *The Labour Unrest – What it is and what it portends* in 1911, *The New Faith* in 1915, *The Economic Consequences of Power Production* in 1921, *Money and Power and Human Life* in 1932 *The Socialist Goal*, also in 1932 and *Capitalism and the Consumer* in 1935.. There is no entry for Henderson in the 13 volume *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, nor is there a biography of him in the volumes of the *Labour Annual* and *Reformers Yearbook* in the 1890s and 1900s. Norwich Library services published in 1940 a short pamphlet listing his publications. Edward Thompson interviewed Henderson for his study of William Morris, which includes a set of letters from Morris to Henderson. Henderson also features in Steven Cherry's 1989 pamphlet on *Politics and the Labour Movement in Norwich 1660-1914: Doing Different?* The elderly Henderson also appears in the last few shots of a film, *Labour and the New Society*, made by the Norwich Labour Party in 1951, which can be viewed at <http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/635>.

*"We socialists refuse to accept as an adequate standard of life any standard which stops short of full human life. ..We set up a human standard. And whatever kind of life the general resources of the world can make possible for all men has got to go into the standard... To reserve for the enjoyment of a class alone any of these things which might be the common human heritage is evidence of injustice in social organisation. And if the whole of the proposals of the orthodox political party for*

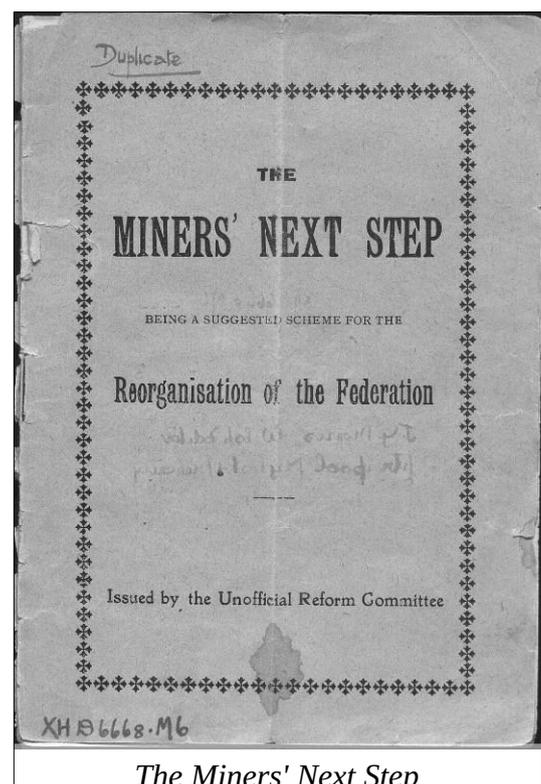
*'social reform' within the existing order were carried out tomorrow, this fundamental injustice of class division and class privilege would still remain. Socialism puts it to you that the settlement of this problem of poverty can only be brought about by getting rid of the placeholders who are bleeding the life of the country white by the tribute-levying system of private ownership of land and capital of the country. The nation, if it desires its resources to get into the homes and lives of its people, must own its land and its capital, and so control the sources of wealth upon which it lives; must organise its own industry, and carry on the production of the national wealth for use in the general national life.."*

*"That is socialism: The nationalisation of the land and of the means of producing and distributing wealth; and the organisation of industry as a civic service under public ownership and control for the benefit of all, instead of, as now, under private ownership and control for private profit."*

## **OUR HISTORY 58**

### ***The Miners' Next Step (1912)***

The Miners' Next Step was a pamphlet setting out a suggested scheme for the reorganisation of the South Wales Federation of Miners Unions, published by an 'unofficial reform committee' based in Tonypanyd in South Wales. The pamphlet was drawn up by a group of miners – Noah Ablett, Will Hay, W H Mainwaring, George Dolling, Noah Rees and C L Gibbons. Mainwaring acted as committee secretary. Ablett and Hay had previously published an article on 'a minimum wage for the miners' in Tom Mann's *Industrial Syndicalist*. Hay was editor of the *South Wales Worker*. Ablett and Rees had been sponsored by the miners' union to study at Ruskin College in Oxford in 1907. Rees returned to South Wales as secretary of the Cambrian lodge of the union and was active in the Cambrian Combine Committee strike of 1910-11. Ablett, elected checkweigher in the Mardy colliery, was involved in the establishment of the Plebs League in 1908 and the foundation of the Central Labour College as a Marxist alternative to Ruskin. Ablett became a governor of the college and contributed an article on the case for



independent working-class education to the first issue of the Plebs journal. His writings for Plebs were published in a 1919 volume Easy Outlines of Economics. Between 1921 and 1926, Ablett served on the executive committee of the Miners Federation of Great Britain. He remained a militant socialist and was arrested and fined for a speech during the 1926 General Strike, Mainwaring joined the Communist Party. Both Ablett and Mainwaring were candidates for the general secretaryship of the MFGB in 1924, a contest won by A J Cook.

*"Our objective begins to take shape before your eyes. Every industry thoroughly organised, in the first place, to fight, to gain control of, and then to administer, the industry. The co-ordination of all industries on a Central Production Board, who, with a statistical department to ascertain the needs of the people, will issue its demands on the different departments of industry, leaving to the men themselves to determine under what conditions and how, the work should be done. This would mean real democracy in real life, making for real manhood and womanhood. Any other form of democracy is a delusion and a snare."*

*"And with this realization, the age-long oppression of Labour will draw to an end. The weary sigh of the over driven slave, pitilessly exploited and regarded as an animated tool of burden; the mediaeval and fast bound to the soil, and life-long prisoner of the lord's domain, subject to all the caprices of his lord's lust or anger ; the modern wage slave, with nothing but his labour to sell, selling that, with his manhood as a wrapper, in the world's market place for a mess of pottage : these are phases of slavery, and mankind shall at last have leisure and inclination to really live as men, and not as the beasts which perish."*

## OUR HISTORY 59

### Arthur Ponsonby: *Diplomacy and Democracy* (1915)

Arthur Ponsonby was the son of Queen Victoria's private secretary and a radical Liberal MP from 1908. At the time of the outbreak of the First World War, he chaired the Liberal Party's Foreign Affairs Committee. He was the leader of a small group of radical MPs who spoke out against the British declaration of war against Germany. The failure of the radical backbenchers and the discovery of the secret agreement with France into which the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey had entered led to the establishment of the Union of the Democratic Control of Foreign Policy (UDC) initiated by Ponsonby and Charles Trevelyan, the junior Minister who had resigned from Asquith's government, which also involved Ramsay MacDonald



Arthur Ponsonby

and Edmund Morel. He was an active member of the 1917 club, which supported the February 1917 revolution and in 1918 joined the Labour Party, being re-elected as an MP in 1922. As junior foreign minister in MacDonald's 1924 Government (MacDonald was his own foreign secretary), Ponsonby introduced the constitutional requirement that no treaty could be brought into effect until Parliament had had the opportunity to debate it – a small but critical victory in the fight for parliamentary control over foreign policy. In 1928, he published *Falsehood in Wartime*, which contained 'an assortment of lies circulating throughout the nations during the Great War'. In the 1929-1931 he held junior ministerial positions in the Dominions and Transport departments before being appointed to the cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. Between 1931 and 1935, he was leader of the Labour Party in the House of Lords. He was active in the Peace Pledge Union and the National Peace Council. He opposed Labour joining Churchill's war coalition in 1940, and argued for negotiation rather than bombing to end the war.

*"Democracy in its true sense, that is to say the whole people, must rise to its great responsibility, and must, by knowledge and understanding, by control and guidance, utilise its power to secure a far higher degree of social well-being in our own land, the advancement of international unity and mutual comprehension among nations, and the extension of the best elements of civilization throughout the world."*

*"Democracy must not be deliberately prevented, as it is now, from participation in one of the most important functions of government. The peoples must tear the bondage from their mouths, and prepare themselves; so that, seeing and understanding, they may help in the councils of the world with a better chance of success than their Governments, their statesmen and their diplomatists, whom they have allowed too long to exercise, behind closed doors, the sole management of affairs which concern their national existence."*

*"The stuffy hothouse atmosphere of diplomacy must be cleansed by the fresh air of publicity. The spiders of intrigue which have woven undisturbed their tangled webs in secret must be chased out of darkness into the open light of day. Treaties that now lie forgotten as mouldy parchments on dusty shelves must be converted into living instruments of binding obligation."*

*"But, first and foremost, there must be a general acceptance of the fact that statesmen, however astute they may be, can never establish a permanent, enlightened and pacific relationship between nations, unless they have at their back the co-operation, the approval and the intense and determined desire of the great mass of the people."*

## OUR HISTORY 60

### J T Murphy: *The Workers Committee* (1917)

This pamphlet was published by the Sheffield Workers Committee. Its author was John Murphy, born in Manchester of Irish descent, who had started work in the Vickers factory in Sheffield at the age of 13. In 1914, he became shop steward for the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE). In 1916, Murphy was one of the leaders of a strike against conscription of skilled workers. He was a supporter of the syndicalism of De Leon and Connolly and secretary of the Sheffield branch of the Amalgamation Committee Movement. Chair of the Sheffield Workers committee, Murphy also became assistant secretary of the national Shop Stewards and Workers committee movement, which in January 1918 adopted the Sheffield statement as its official statement of policy. The pamphlet sold about 150,000 copies. Murphy joined the Socialist Labour Party, was a member of its executive committee and wrote for its journal, the *Socialist*.

He stood unsuccessfully for the SLP in the 1918 election for Manchester Gorton against John Hodge, Labour MP and Minister of Labour in Lloyd George's coalition government. Murphy joined the Communist Party on its formation, and joined its executive committee, also becoming delegate to the Moscow based Red International of Labour Unions (RILU). He was one of the communist leaders imprisoned in 1925 for seditious libel and incitement to mutiny. He was however critical of Pollitt's strategy and expelled from the CP in 1931. He then joined the Labour Party becoming active in the Socialist League and the Popular Front. In 1939, he returned to the shopfloor as a turner. He wrote a number of books including *Preparing for Power* in 1934 and an autobiography *New Horizons* in 1941. A biography of Murphy was published by Ralph Darlington in 2000.



*"Modern methods of production are social in character. We mean by this statement that workmen of all kinds associate together, and are necessary to each other to produce goods. The interests of one, therefore, are the interests of another. Mechanics cannot get along without labourers or without crane drivers; none of these can dispose with the blacksmith, the grinder, the forgerman etc, yet in spite of this interdependence, which extends throughout all industry, the organisations of the workers are almost all anti-social in character."*

*"They keep the workers divided by organising them on the basis of their differences instead of their common interests. Born at a period when large scale*

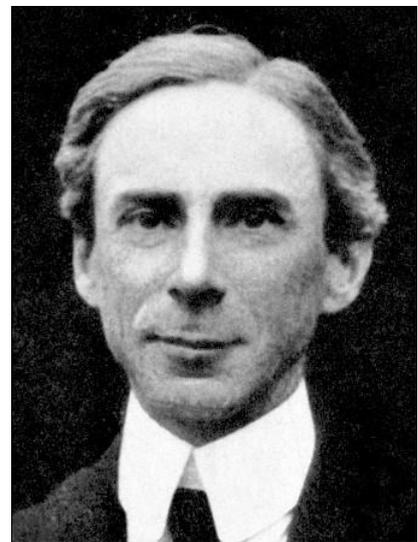
*production had not arrived, when skill was at a greater premium than it is today, many have maintained the prejudices which organisations naturally cultivate, while during the same period of growth the changes in methods of production were changing their position in relation to other workers, unperceived by them. With the advent of the general labour unions catering for men and women workers the differences became organised differences, and the adjustment of labour organisations to the changes increasingly complex. The skilled men resent the encroachments of the unskilled, and both resent the encroachments of women workers."*

*"Yet everyone of the wage-earning classes, whether man or woman, is in the same fix. Each has to work for wages or starve. Each fears unemployment.....The only way the mutual interests of the wage earners can be secured, therefore, is by united effort on the part of all independent workers, whether men or women. ... With the workshops then as the new units or organisation, we will now show how, starting with these, we can erect the structure of the Great Industrial Union, invigorate the labour movement with the real democratic spirit, and in the process lose none of the real values won in the historic struggle of the trade union movement."*

## **OUR HISTORY 61**

### **Bertrand Russell: *Roads to Freedom* (1918)**

The philosopher, Bertrand Russell, was politically active throughout his long life- from the No Conscription Fellowship during the First World War to CND and the Committee of 100 in the 1960s. His first political work in 1896 was a study of *German Social Democracy*. In 1916 he published the *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, in 1917 his *Political Ideals*, and in 1920 he published a critique of the *Theory and Practice of Bolshevism*. This extract is taken from his 1918 work *Roads to Freedom* which reviewed the principles of socialism and anarchism, advocating a form of guild socialism. Russell was pluralist in his politics but can best be described as a libertarian socialist and pacifist, conviction he retained throughout his life.



*Bertrand Russell*

*"The attempt to conceive imaginatively a better order of human society than the destructive and cruel chaos in which mankind has hitherto existed is by no means modern: it is at least as old as Plato, whose Republic set the model for the Utopias of*

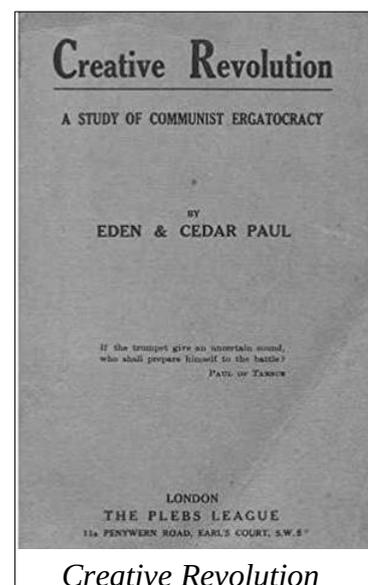
*subsequent philosophers. Whoever contemplates the world in the light of an ideal – whether what he seeks be intellect, or art, or love, or simple happiness, or all together – must feel a great sorrow in the evils that men needlessly allow to continue, and – if he be a man of force and vital energy – an urgent desire to lead men to the realisation of the good which inspires his creative vision. It is this desire which has been the primary force moving the pioneers of Socialism and Anarchism, as it moved the inventors of ideal commonwealths in the past. In this there is nothing new. What is new in Socialism and Anarchism is that close relation of the ideal to the present sufferings of men, which has enabled powerful political movements to grow out of the hopes of solitary thinkers. It is this that makes Socialism and Anarchism important, and it is this that makes them dangerous to those who batten, consciously or unconsciously, upon the evils of our present order of society."*

*"The world that we must seek is a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure full of joy and hope, based rather upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others. It must be a world in which affection has free play. In which love is purged of the instinct for domination, in which cruelty and envy has been dispelled by happiness and the unfettered development of all the instincts that build up life and fill it with mental delights. Such a world is possible; it waits only for men to wish to create it."*

## **OUR HISTORY 62**

### **Eden and Cedar Paul: *Creative Revolution* (1920)**

Eden Paul was the son of the publisher Charles Kegan Paul. He was a medical student who assisted Beatrice Webb and Charles Booth in their social studies of East London before becoming a war correspondent for the Times in the Sino-Japanese war of 1895. He practiced medicine in the Far East before returning to England. He was a member of the ILP and worked for the French Socialist Party before joining the Communist Party. Cedar Paul, Eden Paul's second wife was born Gertrude Davenport, daughter of a composer, and studied music. She joined the ILP in 1912 and was secretary of the British section of the Women's International Council of Socialist and Labour Organisations from 1912 to 1919. Marrying Eden Paul in 1915, the couple translated over 130 works by French, German, Russian and Italian writers, including works by Marx,



Hilferding, Michels, Stalin and Plekhanov. Cedar Paul also joined the Communist Party and was on the committee of the Plebs League. They published *Creative Revolution in 1920*, subtitled 'A Study of Communist Ergatocracy'. They coined the word 'ergatocracy' to replace the more commonly used 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. In 1921, they published *Proletcult*, which was a study of proletarian education and culture in Britain, France, Germany and Russia.

*"In the theoretical field, we wish to effect an analysis of socialist trends and to attempt a synthesis of contemporary proletarian aims. In the sphere of practice, we hope to intensify and to liberate the impulse towards fresh creative effort."*

*"Socialism ... has threefold roots in the three spheres into which, for convenience, the human psyche has been artificially divided. Intellectually, socialism is a criticism of the existing order; emotionally and in the realm of art it is the feeling that we can replace that order by a better, by an order that shapes itself in the imagination of the result of our intellectual criticism of capitalism; volitionally, or in the realm of will, it is an endeavour to create in the world of objective fact what we have already conceived in the intellectual and artistic imagination. It is an endeavour to overthrow the capitalist order, that latest and most finished form of ownership rule, and to replace it by the rule, or better by the administration, of the workers. It is an attempt to put an end to exploitation, to the use of man or woman, as a mere means to another's ends.*

*"We return to the idea that the revolution is a transcendent creative act, wherein man's will, guided by the accumulated knowledge, asserts its freedom, widening the bounds of freedom alike for the individual and for the race.....; Human freedom is, with all its inevitable limitations is precisely one of those phenomena wherein is displayed the triumph of life over material causation. .... The will to revolution is for us the real cause of the creative revolution now in progress, a revolution that will signalise an enormous advance in man's movement towards freedom. If this be no more than poetry, we say with the poet: Yet freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying, streams like the thunderstorm AGAINST THE WIND.' "*

## OUR HISTORY 67

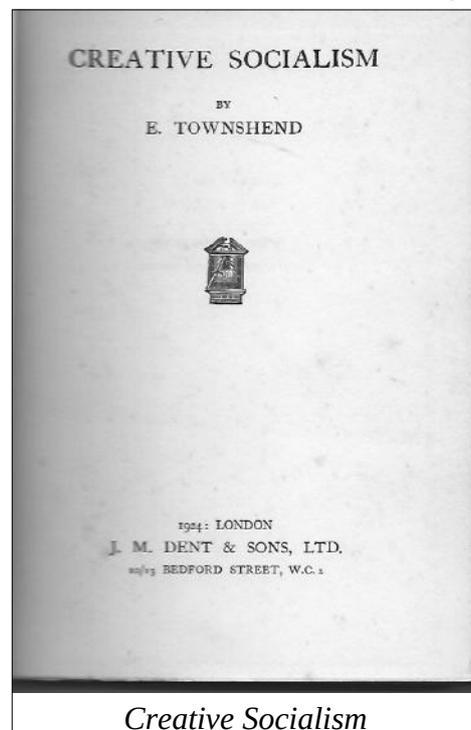
### Emily Townshend: *Creative Socialism* (1924)

Educated as one of the first cohort of women students at Girton College, Cambridge, Emily Townshend was a member of the Fabian Society who lived in Earls Court, London. She had been married to an architect, a relative of George Bernard Shaw's wife, but he died in 1897. Emily Townsend was active in education reform, running a journal called *The School Child* in 1911. She later qualified as a sanitary inspector. Together with her daughters she was active in the suffrage movement and was once imprisoned for a fortnight. One of her daughters, Mrs Keeling, became a Labour member of the London County Council. Emily Townsend wrote one Fabian pamphlet – on *William Morris and Communism* but resigned from the Society in 1915 on the basis that it 'had fallen out of the real line of advance'.

She then helped to found the National Guilds League. She was a friend of G D H Cole, as well as of C P Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian.

After the First World War, she developed an interest in Italian fascism, which she considered to be a form of militant socialism and translated the work of the Italian syndicalist and fascist Odon Por. In 1923, she published Por's two major works: *Guilds and Co-operatives in Italy* and *Fascism*, with Cole contributing an appendix to the first volume, both volumes published by the Labour Publishing Company. Townsend was also a friend of the French Cubist painters and a collector of modern art. She was 73 when she wrote *Creative Socialism*, which had originated as an essay on Por, but also served as a reflection on the Labour Party in government. In a memoir, published privately by her friends in 1936, was described as 'plump, rosy-faced, talkative, argumentative.' In 1934 at the age of 85, she was 'still enjoying, investigating, exploring, still making friends, still young'. Apparently, she was converted from fascism to communism in her final years, convinced that only 'bloody revolution' could save civilisation.

*"The Labour Party, fine as it is, is not doing, and cannot do, the work of Socialism. It is doing the work that would be done by an equally able and enlightened Liberal Party. It may be, and indeed is, work of vital importance, yet every such act of*



*compromise not only tends to strengthen and consolidate the old system which we want to undermine but tends also to destroy the creative impulse for the new."*

*"It used to be believed that social democracy would lead to social revolution. Many socialists believe it still, but for those who look below the surface, it has been disproved all along the line, first in one European country, then in another. Social democracy, with its millions of voting adherents, dare not insist unconditionally on its ideal. It has not the power, and never will have power, to insist. Notwithstanding its legislative reforms and its able administration, nay, even in virtue of them, it is a menace to real progress if it deludes its followers with the idea that the work of revolution can be done for them, instead of by them."*

*"... It is up to us to erect another ideal, an ideal of communal service and of the responsibilities, the privileges and the rights of service, an ideal of freedom – not merely political freedom, but economic freedom, the right to do the work of the world in our own way..... The creative passions of man must be enlisted for the coming battle. These alone have the power both to construct and to destroy, but the constructive impulse is the stronger: destruction is but an incident of creation."*

## **OUR HISTORY 64**

### **William Mellor: *Direct Action* (1920)**

A member of the Oxford University Fabian Society, Mellor became secretary to the Fabian Research committee in 1913. He was a contributor to the *Daily Herald* and a leader of the Guild Socialist movement, serving as secretary to the National Guilds League. He was involved in the Shop Stewards Movement and acted as an unofficial adviser to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Jailed as a conscientious objector, after the war he was industrial editor of the Herald, becoming editor in 1926. Briefly a member of the Communist Party on its foundation, he soon returned to the ILP. In the 1930's, he was a member of the Society for Socialist Inquiry and Propaganda and then in the Socialist League. Mellor was a good speaker and propagandist but tended to be domineering and temperamental. He twice tried unsuccessfully to enter parliament. At one time he had a relationship with ILP's Barbara Betts, later known as Barbara Castle. Many of his writings were collaborations with G D H Cole.



*"The struggle of the classes has two sides: it is a struggle for social equality, for the abolition of all economic distinctions between man and man, and it is a struggle*

*for the right of every individual to express himself in the work he does, for the right to labour not for the benefit of an employer, but for the wellbeing and happiness of one's fellows. The struggle finds its expression on the economic field, for on that field is to be found the basis of all life. Bread and butter are the fundamentals of all existence, and a world in which supplies of bread and butter are unfairly distributed is a world marked by social injustice and social inequality. This fundamental economic inequality affects every sphere of life and eventuates in a world whose people are sharply divided in morality, in methods of life, in outlook and in speech. It produces within society, two classes – the one leisured and cultured, free from economic care and worry; the other condemned to a lifelong struggle to sustain animal existence, living the drab existence of a beast of burden. It produces a race of masters and a race of slaves. More and more as Capitalism develops the segregation of these classes is affected, and the continued free development of 'big business can only end in the absolute division of mankind into machine-minders and machine-owners. Such a world is the apotheosis of Capitalism and the burial-ground of freedom."*

*"Fortunately for the world there is no free and unhindered development of Capitalism. The wage-slaves are everywhere questioning the divine right of their masters. They are seeking for a new basis of life, and blunderingly, but surely, are working for a change that shall destroy for ever that power of man over man that springs from the possession of property. The underworld is in a state of unrest, and it is striving to throw off the chains that weigh it down. That throwing off is in process the world over and in no country is Capitalism left unchallenged. The world is in revolt, and the weapons used to consummate that revolt are economic. Direct Action is the watchword of both those who defend and those who attack. My hopes lie with all the countless millions the world over who are striving to create out of the chaos of the old a new world, free from injustice, economic slavery and unmerited suffering."*

## **OUR HISTORY 66**

### **Sylvia Pankhurst: Communism and its Tactics (1921)**

Sylvia Pankhurst was one of the three daughters of Richard and Emmeline Pankhurst. She was active in the Suffragette movement but adopted a more radical position than her mother and her sister Christabel. Whereas Emmeline and Christabel supported the war effort, Sylvia adopted an anti-war position. In 1913, Sylvia established the East London Federation of Suffragettes as a working class based militant feminist organisation. In May 1918, the organisation was transformed into the Workers Socialist Federation, with its journal the *Women's Dreadnought*

becoming renamed as the *Worker's Dreadnought*. Pankhurst adopted an anti-parliamentary position and collaborated with other libertarians including her partner, the Italian anarchist, Sylvio Corio. She was active in the workers' council movement and in the discussions which led to the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1920. Meeting Lenin in Moscow, she was later one of the targets of Lenin's critique, *Left Wing Communism – an Infantile Disorder*. Pankhurst was an opponent of the authoritarian communism of the British Socialist Party and had some sympathy with the syndicalist position of the Socialist Labour Party. She resisted the BSP's attempt to merge the *Dreadnought* with their journal *The Call*. She then established her own communist grouping, which she designated as the Communist Party, British Section of the Third International or CP (BSTI). However, with the failure of negotiations to merge with the new CPGB many of Pankhurst's supporters rejected her leadership and defected to the new party. The *Dreadnought* actually survived until 1924, though Pankhurst's new group, The Communist Workers Party remained a small East End based propaganda group, rather than a national political party.

In 1924, Pankhurst and Corio moved to Woodford Green in Essex. They had a child, with the couple resuming political activity in 1932 initiating a campaign against Italian fascism and in 1936 establishing a journal opposing Italian fascism and colonialism - *The New Times and Ethiopia News*. She befriended Haile Selassie, the exiled Emperor of Ethiopia and after Corio's death in 1954, moved to Addis Ababa, where she published the *Ethiopia Observer* and wrote a series of books supporting Ethiopian independence, dying in 1960. Her son Richard, who had previously written on early British and Irish socialist and co-cooperative history, became professor of history at Addis Ababa and a leading writer on Ethiopian history, and in his 80s was still producing historical works as well as co-authoring studies of his mother.



Sylvia Pankhurst

*"Under communism all shall satisfy their material needs without stint or measure from the common storehouse, according to their desires. Everyone will be able to have what he or she desires in food, in clothing, books, music, education and travel facilities. The abundant production now possible, and which invention will constantly facilitate, will remove any need for rationing or limiting of consumption. Every individual, relying on the great common generation, will be secure from material want an anxiety."*

*"There will be no class distinctions, since these arise from differences in material possessions, education and social status – all such distinctions will be swept away. There will be neither rich nor poor. Money will no longer exist, and none will desire to hoard commodities not in use, since a fresh supply may be obtained at will. There will be no selling, because there will be no buyers, since everyone will be able to obtain everything at will, without payment. The possession of private property, beyond that which is in actual personal use, will disappear. There will be neither masters nor servants, all being in a position of economic equality – no individual will be able to become the employer of another."*

*"With the disappearance of the anxious struggle for existence, which saps the energy and cripples initiative, a new vigour, a new independence will develop. People will have more courage to desire freedom, greater determination to possess it. They will be more exacting in their demands upon life, more fastidious as to their choice of a vocation. They will wish to work at what they enjoy, to order their lives as they desire. Work will generally be enjoyed as never before in the history of mankind. The desire for freedom will be tempered by the sense of responsibility towards the commonweal, which will provide security for all."*

## **OUR HISTORY 67**

### **Leonard Woolf: *Socialism and Cooperation* (1921)**

Leonard Woolf was a civil servant and a member of the Fabian Society. He wrote for radical journals including the *Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian*. In 1916 he wrote a book on *International Government* for the Fabian Society, which became one of the blueprints for the post-war League of Nations. He was an authority on international affairs and in 1920 wrote *Economic Imperialism and Empire and Commerce in Africa*. Woolf was a friend of Margaret Llewellyn Davies of the Cooperative Women's Guild and wrote *Socialism and Cooperation* for the ILP as well as a pamphlet on *International Co-operative Trade*



Leonard Woolf

for the Fabian Society. Together with his wife Virginia, he ran the Hogarth Press. In the interwar period Woolf was an active member of the Labour Party's advisory committees on international and colonial affairs. After the Second World War he published three volumes on political science, focusing on the mass psychology of war. He published five volumes of his autobiography, surviving until 1969.

*"As against the capitalist and capitalism, I would go as far, probably, as the most extreme Guild Socialist or Red Communist in the demand for emancipation of the worker. But socialism itself implies that what is true against capitalism is untrue against the community of consumers. My suggestion ... will be seen to be all directed to establishing joint control and a balance of power within the framework of industry between the organised consumers and the organised producers. I believe that joint control and balance of power to be essential to the transition stage to pure socialism, for without it there will be exploitation of one class by the other and the growth of a rational psychology of consumption and production will be impossible. And, as a matter of fact, if the capitalist were eliminated, there would obviously be a far greater danger of the consumers being exploited by strong organisations of producers than of the consumers exploiting the organised producer. ... So long as the psychology of capitalism remains, all power of exploitation is dangerous to the community, and in the transition period I wish to see it neither in the hands of the consumers nor co-operators, nor in the hands of the workers and producers. That is why I believe that the immediate object of the socialist should be to eliminate the capitalist and establish a balance of power between producer and consumer."*

## **OUR HISTORY 68**

### **Clifford Allen: *Socialism and the Next Labour Government* (1925)**

Clifford Allen was leader of the Independent Labour Party. A Fabian at Cambridge University, in 1912 he became president of the University Socialist Federation. Allen was general manager and then editor of the Labour Party's *Daily Citizen*. In 1914, he took an anti-war position and helped to form the No-Conscription Fellowship, of which he became president. A conscientious objector, he was imprisoned several times and his health never fully recovered. After the war he was active in the Guild socialist movement and appointed ILP treasurer, becoming chairman in 1923. In this role he was active in the Labour and Socialist Union which in May 1923 had reunited with the Vienna Union (or the 'Two and a Half International') of which the ILP had been a member.



*Clifford Allen*

Allen was to resign as ILP chair in October 1925, as the ILP became dominated by James Maxton and his group of Glasgow MPs. Allen had worked closely with Ramsay MacDonald and supported MacDonald when he formed the National Government in August 1931. He was rewarded with a peerage and was subsequently

one of the founders of the cross-party Next Five Years group working with the young Harold MacMillan and Alfred Barratt Brown of Ruskin College to support national economic planning. As a pacifist, he was active in the League of Nations Union and the National Peace Council and in 1938 a supporter of Neville Chamberlain's attempts to avoid war with Germany. A biography of Allen, *The Open Conspirator*, was published by Arthur Marwick in 1964. In the following year, a collection of his writings and correspondence was published under the title *Plough My Own Furrow* by Martin Gilbert.

*"It is quite legitimate to assert that mankind is too selfish, too foolish, too cruel, too cynical for any speedy attempt to change its manner of life, or to replace suffering with happiness. For all I know that may be true, but we at least, cannot succumb to the council of despair. Is it entirely false or foolish to suggest that we happen by some favoured chance to be living at the moment when one stage of civilisation has exhausted itself, and when science and education demand rapid and immediate changes? If this be so, we can only fulfil our duty by accepting the situation forced upon us. We shall reject every political method but that of submitting to democracy the policy in which we believe. I think this favourable chance would not have come in one generation were it not for the hazard our leaders took when the Labour government was formed. The ultimate value of that bold decision depends on the use to which we now put the opportunity thus created. It may be that those who think in this way have no right to win a hearing in the world of practical politics, but at least we will declare our belief that Socialism could be accepted by this nation within our lifetime. Such a policy will require from us an utter rejection of all interest in politics as a means to personal power; it will involve a life of personal sincerity, which is not often found in the politics of any party; it will, above all things, require charity between ourselves."*

## **OUR HISTORY 69**

### **H N Brailsford: *Socialism for Today* (1925)**

Henry Brailsford was a journalist and leader writer for a number of Liberal and socialist newspapers. A friend of republican exiles, he volunteered to fight in the Greek army against Turkey in 1897, with his experiences novelised in *The Broom of the War-God*, before leading a relief mission for the Balkan committee in 1903, leading to his second book, *Macedonia*. A member of the Friends of Russian Freedom, he was convicted of supplying passports to Russian exiles. Brailsford joined the ILP in 1907; in 1922 he



Henry Brailsford

became editor of the ILP paper, the *New Leader*, and *Socialism for To-Day*, published by the ILP, was based on articles published in the paper. In 1914, Brailsford published his critique of economic imperialism and military rivalry – *The War of Steel and Gold*. He was an active member of the Union for Democratic Control and promoted international government and published a book advocating a *League of Nations* in 1917. Failing to be elected to Parliament, he visited post-war Europe and became a critique of the Versailles Treaty, publishing *Across the Blockade* (1919) and *After the Peace* (1920). He then visited the Soviet Union, was sympathetic to the revolution but critical of the Bolsheviks in *The Russian Workers Republic* (1921) and *How the Soviets Work* (1927). He was an active member of the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International Affairs. A critic of imperialism, he visited India and published *Rebel India* in 1931. When the ILP disaffiliated from the Labour Party in 1932, Brailsford helped to set up the Socialist League and in 1937 signed the Unity Manifesto. He helped found *Tribune*, contributed to *Reynolds News* and became leader writer of the *New Statesman*. He wrote a number of further books and pamphlets and in 1944 argued for a magnanimous peace with Germany. He also wrote a detailed study of the Levellers which was edited by Christopher Hill and published in 1961 after his death three years earlier. Brailsford is the subject of an excellent biography by F M Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter*, published in 2000.

*"Socialism does mean a new challenge to human nature, a call to us to adapt ourselves, and to fit ourselves for a new and progressive society... Change the outward social conditions, and the mind of man, his response to different motives, his morals, his attitude to society, his 'human nature' will change, as certainly as his ape-like body changed, when he ceased to live in trees and took to hunting on the ground. We change with our tools, with our houses, with the organisation of our work. Every student of history knows that the slow transition from flints to electric dynamos, from cave-dwellings to skyscrapers, from hunting to capitalist industry, has profoundly modified 'human nature'; it is only in the heat of political discussion that we forget it."*

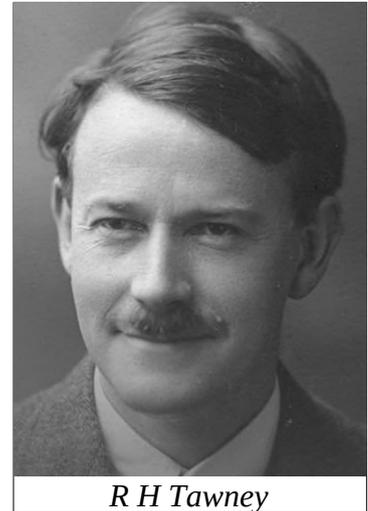
*"We believe that the change we advocate is an inevitable step in the destined march of history. Our hope is to accomplish it without violence or bloodshed. It is not our action which may hurry society into catastrophe – the danger lies in the obstructive delays of men and parties, who will not read the signs of the times. When, year after year, miners and engineers must scan the horizon without hope, when the figure of a million unemployed becomes a normal fact of daily life, when the industries which are the basis of our national wealth must confess themselves unable to pay a living wage – then, at length, the capitalist system admits its bankruptcy. Its*

*evident collapse is a summons to Socialists to act with sincerity and resolution. It is not enough to oppose violence. We can prevent it and frustrate it, only if our own energy and determination give to our peaceful methods an impetus which carries us through crisis to fundamental change."*

## OUR HISTORY 70

### R H Tawney: *Equality* (1931)

Tawney was an economic historian. Influenced by the social idealism of Edward Caird and the religious liberalism of Bishop Charles Gore, after Balliol College, Oxford, he went to live at the Toynbee Hall settlement in Whitechapel, where he became involved in social work. He then became a teacher for the Workers Education Association. Education was a lifelong interest and he served 42 years on the WEA's executive council and was president from 1929 to 1945. Tawney's academic base was the London School of Economics, where he was first Reader and then Professor of Economic History. His first academic work was a study of the *Agrarian Problem of the Sixteenth Century*, published in 1912. He fought in the First World War and was severely wounded. His 1920 study of *The Acquisitive Society* was a critique of capitalism. In 1926 he published *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*. The book *Equality* followed in 1931. Tawney was a Christian Socialist moralist not a Marxist. He had a profound belief in political democracy and an opponent of all forms of totalitarianism. He served on a number of Government Commissions, including the Sankey Commission in 1919 where, together with Sidney Webb, he argued for the nationalisation of the coal industry. He was a regular contributor to the *Manchester Guardian* and the *New Statesman*, writing mainly on educational reform. Tawney joined the Fabian Society first in 1906 (later serving on its executive committee), then the ILP in 1909 and then the Labour Party in 1918. He stood unsuccessfully for a parliamentary seat on three occasions though he considered he was more useful outside Parliament. In 1922 he published *Secondary Education for All* and in 1924, *Education: The Socialist Policy*. He also contributed to the Labour Party's 1928 manifesto, *Labour and the Nation*. Tawney was a member of the education committee of the London County Council and of the consultative committee of the Board of Education. He died in 1962. He is the subject of biographies by Ross Terrill (1973) and Anthony Wright (1987).



*"It is true that while equality is easy, since it demands no more than to float with the current, equality is difficult, for it involves swimming against it. It involves material sacrifices by some, and a lot less painful surrender of sentimental claims by others, and on the part of all, sufficient self-control and public spirit, sufficient respect for themselves and appreciation of their neighbours...."*

*"The reasons for equalizing, means and opportunity allow, the externals of life is not that the scaffolding is more important than the shrine, or that economic interests, for all their clamour and insistence, possess the unique and portentous significance with which the fashionable philosophy of the age is accustomed to ascribe to them. It is not, as austere critics assert, to pamper the gross bodily appetites of an envious multitude, but to free the spirit of all.... The chief enemy of the life of the spirit, whether in art, culture or religion ... is as everyone knows, the idolatry of wealth, with its worship of pecuniary success... and its strong sense of the sanctity of possessions and weak sense of the dignity of human beings, and its consequent emphasis, not on the common interests which unite men, but on the accidents of property, and circumstance, and economic condition, which separate and divide them."*

*"Though the idea of an equal distribution of material wealth may continue to elude us, it is necessary, nevertheless, to make haste towards it, not because such wealth is the most important of man's treasures, but to prove that it is not. It is possible that the ultimate goods of human life .... May be more easily attained, when its instruments and means are less greedily grasped and more freely shared."*

## **OUR HISTORY 71**

### **Stafford Cripps: *Why this Socialism?* (1935)**

Stafford Cripps was a lawyer who was appointed solicitor general by Ramsay Macdonald in 1930. He was elected MP for Bristol East in 1931 but refused to join Macdonald's national coalition government created in response to the economic crisis. In 1932, he helped form the Socialist League and in 1936 advocated a united front with the Communist Party and the Independent Labour Party (which had separated from the Labour Party in 1932). A Christian socialist, Cripps moved towards a Marxist position. When the united front became widened into the anti-fascist Popular Front in 1938, Cripps was expelled from the Labour Party. In 1940 however, with the Soviet Union entering the Second World War, Cripps was appointed by Churchill as



*Stafford Cripps*

ambassador in Moscow. In 1942 he led the Cripps mission to India where he promised post-war political reform in exchange for Indian support for the war effort.

A critic of Churchill, Cripps became leader of the House of Commons before joining the cabinet as Minister of Aircraft Production. In 1945 he was readmitted to the Labour Party and appointed President of the Board of Trade in Attlee's government and in 1947, on the resignation of Hugh Dalton, he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, where he gained a reputation as the austerity chancellor. Cripps resigned on the grounds of ill health in 1950, to be succeeded by Hugh Gaitskell. Cripps died in 1952.

Cripps wrote a number of pamphlets for the Socialist League and contributed a chapter on 'Can socialism come by constitutional methods?' to the Socialist League's 1935 sponsored volume of *Problems of a Socialist Government*. In 1945 he published a volume entitled *Towards Christian Democracy*. There are biographies of Cripps by Eric Estorick (1949), Chris Bryant (1997) and Peter Clarke (2004).

*"If once we appreciate how completely our everyday lives are controlled and conditioned by the methods we adopt for producing and distributing those many commodities which we can win from nature, we must realise what a grave responsibility we have not to allow an outworn and inefficient system to continue, and to drag us into poverty, disease and war. It is no good railing at our circumstances if we do nothing to change them; they were man-made, and by man they can be changed."*

*"Our machinery of Government still allows us to exercise our own individual power through the ballot-box, unlike many other countries, where the breakdown of the system has been more complete. If once we can put out of our view our individual or class interests and examine the situation as it affects the great majority of the workers today in this and other countries, we must, I believe come to the conclusion that it is our bounden duty to change the economic system, for by that means alone can we attain abundance, peace and freedom."*

## OUR HISTORY 72

### Socialist League: *Forward to Socialism* (1934)

"We are living today in a potential Age of Plenty, when the productive capacity of the world, thanks to man's technical and scientific conquest of nature, is so enormous that there should not be any man, woman or child poor, ill-clad, ill-shod, or badly housed. A steadily rising standard of living for the millions of workers can be achieved. But from the very fact that all production is governed by the demand of private property to receive its toll in rent and interest arises from the tragic paradox that, while colossal wealth is piled up in the hands of the few, poverty, unemployment, ill-health, ruin, and social degradation are the lot of millions."

" If we want to increase our communal wealth by enabling full use to be made of the productive capacity of Mines, Factories and Fields, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

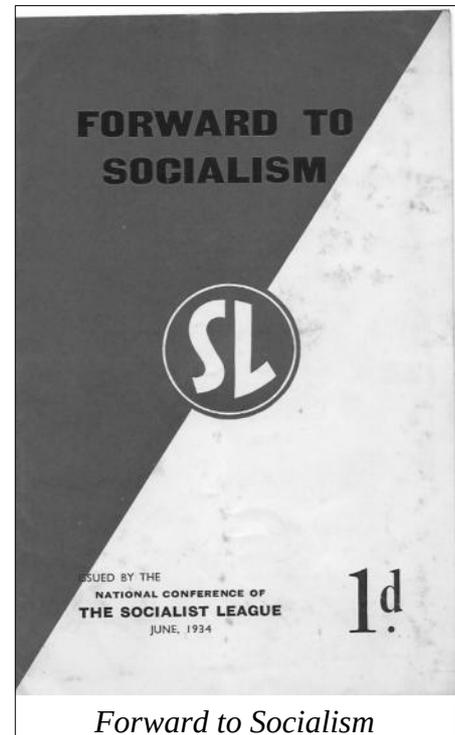
To enable each person to have a fair and equal opportunity of making his full contribution to the advancement of life and to obtain his fair share of wealth, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

To enable all to work reasonable hours under the best possible conditions, rather than some to work long hours and others not at all, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

To see that the State accepts the responsibility of providing an opportunity for everyone to render useful service and of maintaining in decency and comfort all those who are not fit to work, through age or illness, or for whom no opportunity of work is provided, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

If we are to ensure to every family the privacy and comfort of a real home of its own and full opportunity to enjoy life freely after work is done, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM.

"So that society as a whole shall be responsible for the health, well-being, and education of its people, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM. In order to stop for ever the exploitation of the workers by the property-owning class and the financiers, by



*ending the private ownership and control of the land and all other means of production, and of all those financial institutions necessary for the maintenance of a highly organised industrial life, WE MUST HAVE SOCIALISM."*

*"Socialists stand for true Freedom and real Democracy, but are opposed to the time-wasting and obstructive use of Capitalist democratic procedure, which has brought parliamentary government into disrepute, and on which the propaganda for Fascism fastens. Parliament must become a workshop. The issue is joined between the defenders of private ownership of the means of production, which spreads disaster and chaos throughout society, and the supporters of Socialism, which alone can remove poverty and bring prosperity and well-being to the Common People. There is no time to lose. We must act and must act quickly and decisively. The longer Capitalism continues the more will poverty, distress, unemployment, misery, and slumdom curse this country, the more certainly will the men, women and children of Britain be dragged into the desolation and devastation of War. Let the slogan be: CLOSE UP THE RANKS! FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!"*

## **OUR HISTORY 73**

### **John Strachey: *The Theory and Practice of Socialism* (1936)**

John Strachey was the most prolific British advocate of Marxist theory in the 1930s. From an upper middle-class family, after Oxford University he became a journalist at the *Spectator*, of which his father was editor. Joining the ILP in 1924, he unsuccessfully contested a parliamentary seat in Birmingham for the Labour Party the following year. He then became editor of the ILP's monthly journal *Socialist Review*, moving on after the General Strike to become editor of the Mineworkers Union journal, *The Miner*. He was close to



*John Strachey*

Oswald Mosley and in fact published *Revolution by Reason* in 1925 which promoted Mosley's economic policies, before Mosley left the ILP to form the New Party and subsequently the British Union of Fascists. Strachey was however Mosley's parliamentary secretary when the latter was a Minister in the 1929-1931 government and contributed to both the Mosley manifesto and the volume *A National Policy* which in effect became the New Party's founding statement. However, like his co-author Aneurin Bevan, he broke with Mosley and in his case moved to a Marxist position.

Though never a member of the Communist Party, Strachey published a series of books promoting a Marxist position in effect identical to the position of the British

Communist Party, which also supported the Soviet Union's political and economic structure including the 'dictatorship of the proletariat': *The Coming Struggle for Power* (1932), *The Menace of Fascism* (1933), *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis* (1935) and *The Theory and Practice of Socialism* (1936). He wrote for the Communist Party's *Daily Worker* and in 1936, together with Victor Gollancz and Harold Laski, he helped found the Left Book Club and its journal *Left News*. Strachey then sought to integrate orthodox Marxist theory and Keynesian interventionist economic theory into a leftist social democracy. He distanced himself from the Communist Party to the extent of contributing to Gollancz's *Betrayal of the Left* in 1941. Strachey was elected as Labour MP for Dundee in the 1945 general election and served in a number of government posts including Minister for Food and Secretary of State for War. In 1956, Strachey published *Contemporary Capitalism*, where he argued that socialism could be progressed within a reformed capitalist system, which in effect was a rebuttal of his pre-war arguments. This was followed by *The End of Empire* in 1959, *On the Prevention of War* in 1962 and *The Challenge of Democracy* in 1963. In the early 1960s, Strachey was shadow Commonwealth minister. He died in 1963 just before Labour returned to government.

*"During the transition stage between capitalism and socialism there is no possibility of an all-inclusive democracy. For, during this stage, classes will still exist. And there can be no democracy between classes: there can be no democracy between those who own and those who do not own the means of production. During this stage, if socialism is to be built up, the working class must dominate the community just as completely as does the capitalist class in a capitalist society."*

*"Communists and socialists propose that the workers should destroy one dictatorship, that of the capitalists, and replace it with another, their own. But a workers' dictatorship will establish democracy by the far greater part of the population while destroying democracy for the small capitalist class alone. For it will be the comparatively small capitalist class alone over which the new dictatorship will be exercised. Moreover, the capitalist class, having had its ownership of the means of production taken from it, will be gradually absorbed into the working class, which will become co-extensive with society itself. Then, and not till then, will the establishment of true. All-inclusive democracy become possible (The extraordinary historical importance of the new Soviet Constitution is that it shows that the Soviet Union is now reaching this point). Thus what the spokesmen of capitalism call democracy means the effective subjection of the mass of the population to a small minority, whilst what communists and socialists call*

*dictatorship means the subjection of a small and ever-dwindling minority to the great majority of the population – which is itself democratically organised."*

## **OUR HISTORY 74**

### **George Lansbury: *Why Pacifists should be Socialists* (1937)**

Lansbury was leader of the Labour Party between 1932 and 1935. Born in Suffolk, he lived most of his life in the East End of London. After a failed attempt to emigrate to Australia, on returning to England he was active in the London Liberal Party before joining the Social Democratic Federation, becoming its political secretary in 1897. He was elected a member of the Poplar Board of Guardians in 1892 and was also elected to Poplar Council. He established two farm colonies in Essex for the unemployed of East London and led the opposition to the application of the 1905 Poor Law Act. In 1913 he became



*George Lansbury*

editor of the Labour Party's newspaper, the *Daily Herald*. He became Mayor of Poplar in 1922 and successfully led a campaign for rate equalisation to help the poorer boroughs. Lansbury was elected MP for Bow and Bromley in 1910, though resigned to fight a by-election, unsuccessfully, in support of women's suffrage in 1912. He did not return to Parliament until 1922 but retained the Bow and Bromley seat till his death in May 1940. He did not serve in the 1924 Labour Government but was First Commissioner of Works in the 1929-31 Government. He became party leader as the most senior Labour MP who survived the 1931 debacle. He resigned the leadership after the 1935 party conference at which he was criticised by Ernest Bevin for his pacifism, to be succeeded by his deputy, Clement Attlee. Lansbury published his autobiography in 1928. There is an excellent biography of Lansbury by John Shepherd, published in 2002, as well as shorter biographies by Raymond Postgate (1951), Jonathan Schneer (1990) and Bob Holman (also 1990).

*"We are living in what is described by newspapers and everyone else as dangerous times, Fear, that great enemy of mankind, stalks abroad. The hearts of thinking people are full of dread as to what will or may happen tomorrow.... Everybody agrees war is abominable. War is one of the most terrible curses from which mankind suffers. War produces plague, pestilence and famine, but fear of war itself creates mental and moral consequences which are impossible to tabulate. ... In every sphere of life. it is the principle of life and conduct which counts."*

*"I am a pacifist and Socialist because the principles embodied in the life and teaching of the founder of Christianity appeal to me as those which form the*

*standard of life and conduct which, if followed by even one nation, would ultimately save the world from war and give peace and security at home and abroad. There can never be any compromise with truth. We live in a society which is at war all the days of all the years. The results of this daily warfare are seen all around us. It can be seen in the stricken valleys of South Wales and in the senseless extravagance of Mayfair. If you allow a small minority to live in luxury and so arrange things that the maintenance of that luxury is directly dependent on the poverty of that majority, as we have done in the capitalist world, then undeniably the riches of the few are responsible for the poverty of the many. How on earth can we honestly say that we want peace abroad when we will not even make this effort to so organise things that there is peace and goodwill amongst ourselves at home? ... Peace, which must be based on co-operation, is a state of mind as well as a state of affairs, and if that is true, it is impossible to expect men and women to co-operate as nations when as individuals the system forces them to fight each other for their daily bread. The law of the jungle is universal competition."*

*"My contention is that no Socialist who accepts international Socialism can go to war any more than can a person who accepts the Sermon on the Mount as the law of life. A Socialist or a Christian must acknowledge that all wars are civil wars- wars between brothers. There has never been a war which ended any dispute without the slaughter of brother by brother. All nations must accept as sacred the right of each other to determine how they are governed. I want a pre-war conference before all of value we possess in young manhood is slaughter."*

*"In this struggle against war, you who are young are standing as we elder ones have tried to do for peace against war. Love against hatred, co-operation against competition. Throw down your arms. We have thrown ours away never to take them up again. We have renounced imperialism, cast away all thoughts of domination and fear and are now determined to live with all the world as friends and partners in a true commonwealth of peoples, working and sharing life and all life has to give with one another."*

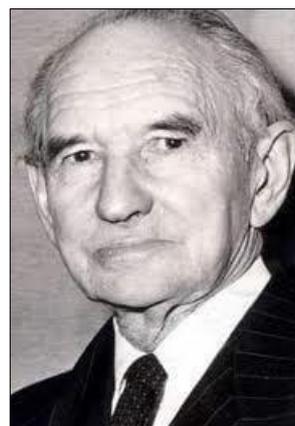
## **OUR HISTORY 75**

### **Douglas Jay: *The Socialist Case* (1937)**

Douglas Jay was an economist and Labour minister. Educated at Winchester and Oxford, he was first a financial journalist at *The Times* and a fellow of All Souls, Oxford, before joining the *Economist* in 1933, and in 1937 joined the *Daily Herald* as city editor, becoming an economic adviser to the Labour Party. Having studied the Great Depression and Keynesian economics, he published his most important work

*The Socialist Case* in 1937. He worked in the Ministry of Supply during the war years. He was personal assistant to Hugh Dalton and then to Attlee at Downing Street before being elected as MP for Battersea North in 1946, holding the seat until 1983. He became a junior Treasury Minister and then Economic Secretary under Stafford Cripps. He was President of the Board of Trade between 1964 and 1967 and argued for the dispersal of economic activity away from London – he was known as 'Mr Regional Development'. Jay was a follower of Hugh Gaitskell. He was sacked by Wilson whose relationship with Jay was awful. Tam Dalyell, in his obituary of Jay in *The Independent* said that Jay regarded Wilson as 'a little crook'.

Jay was a vigorous opponent of British entry into the European Economic Community and campaigned for a No Vote in the 1975 referendum. He joined the House of Lords in 1987. In 1962 he published *Socialism in the New Society* and *After the Common Market* in 1968. In 1980, he published his autobiography, *Change and Fortune*, which is a detailed study of the economic policy of successive Labour governments. His first wife, Peggy Jay, was a leading member of the London County Council and the Inner London Education Authority. Their son, Peter Jay, also a financial journalist, married James Callaghan's daughter before, somewhat controversially, becoming British Ambassador to the US. Douglas Jay died in 1986.



Douglas Jay

becoming British Ambassador to the US. Douglas Jay died in 1986.

*"The case for socialism is mainly economic, and it rests on fact... And in fact the greatest economists have always recognised the three fundamentals of the socialist case: the arbitrary effects of free exchange, the peculiar character of unearned incomes, and the profoundly anti-social consequences of the institution of inheritance...."*

*"For the drastic application of a socialist policy does not necessarily involve, for economic reasons, a revolutionary break with the methods of social reform that have been followed in the last century in democratic countries. The progressive expansion of the social services, the steady extension of social ownership and control, and the even more drastic modification of property and inheritance rights – all these policies need not cause any violent upheaval in the machinery of the economic system."*

*"It may be that peaceful reform is impossible, not for economic, but for political reasons. It may be that the propertied classes will defend their unjust privileges not merely by force but by political force... First there is no economic reason why a clash of this kind is inevitable."*

*"There is no economic reason why a modern industrial State... should not simultaneously overcome the forces of the trade cycle and redistribute the incomes of the rich. Those who proclaim the inevitability of violent revolution are always anxious to base their arguments on economic grounds. But a disinterested examination of the economic facts reveals no such inevitability; and those who proclaim it often seem really inspired, not by any economic analysis at all, but by an irrational eagerness to believe in the imminence of calamity."*

*"Experience may show that even in the democratically inclined countries the attempt to introduce socialism peacefully will meet with forcible resistance. In that case violence would become a necessity and an obligation. But those who recognize that the realities of personal and intellectual freedom are as precious as those of economic justice will probably be of the opinion that the attempt is at least worth making."*

## **OUR HISTORY 76**

### **Evan Durbin: *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (1940)**

Evan Durbin studied economics at University College, Oxford under Hugh Gaitskell. He was a lecturer in economics at the LSE from 1930 to 1945. In 1939 he joined the economic section of the cabinet office, working with Lionel Robbins and Harold Wilson. He then became personal assistant to Attlee when deputy prime minister between 1942 and 1945. He was elected MP for Edmonton in 1945 (with Douglas Jay taking on his previous job). He was Parliamentary Private Secretary to Dalton as Chancellor of the Exchequer and then parliamentary secretary to the Minister of



Works. He died in 1948 in a drowning accident. He published a number of books and pamphlets on economic policy, including *How to Pay for the War* (1939) *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (1940) and *Problems of Economic Planning* (published posthumously in 1949). There is no biography of Durbin, but his daughter, Elizabeth Durbin published in 1985 *New Jerusalem: The Labour Party and the Economics of Democratic Socialism*, which presents a study of her father's work as well as that of his circle including Cole, Dalton, Gaitskell and Jay. The historian Stephen Brooke published substantive articles on Durbin in 1991 and 1996. There is also material on Durbin in Jeremy Nuttall's 2006 book *Psychological Socialism*. Durbin had a significant influence on the thinking of Anthony Crosland.

*"From the evidence of modern psychology the social life of adult human groups can be largely understood as a conflict within their minds between repressed impulse*

to violence and cruelty on the one hand, and their love for each other, for constructive achievement and for the common good, on the other.... The Marxist and Communist defence of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' ... was based upon faulty logic and inadequate empirical evidence ... it represented in our day the series of false religions by which the impulse to cruelty and destruction have been rationalized into a reforming zeal and a love of justice and freedom. The only hope for the future appears therefore, to me, to lie in the preservation, if necessary by force, of the system of political democracy from all assaults upon it."

"Many things can contribute to the happiness of us all. Wealth can contribute to it. A rising standard of living will increase leisure, reduce the physical fatigue of labour, bring comfort and health to a growing proportion of our fellow human beings. Wealth, properly distributed, can tear down the slums, drive back the diseases of malnutrition, open the countryside to our people and bring fresh air, sunlight and safety, to those who lack these elementary necessities. It is the honourable task of the economist, the industrial scientist, and the technician to serve 'the not ignoble end'.... Social equality would certainly increase our joy in living... sense of justice is the necessary saviour to all our happiness in society. For this end the socialist politician honourably strives." "The grip of a class system that frustrates the search for comradeship between us wastes a monstrously high proportion of our natural talent... Every generation is in part united, and in part inspired, by some conception of a better and more just society... We need not be content with anything less... than a society in which property as a source of social inequality is made to wither slowly away, in which the establishment of a rational central control has restored expansion and created economic stability, in which political democracy is preserved and protected as a method of government, and in which children may grow, free from secret fear, into a sociable and happy maturity. This is what I mean by a more just society. An important, indeed an essential, part of it is the constituent principle of socialism. Within it the common happiness of mankind can be, for a long season, safely established."

## **OUR HISTORY 77**

### **Harold Laski: *Reflections on the Revolution in Our Time* (1943)**

Harold Laski was professor of Politics and the London School of Economics from 1926, having held a number of academic positions in the US and Britain from 1916. He briefly worked for Lansbury's *Daily Herald*. He was a member of the Fabian Society executive committee and one of the founders of the Left Book Club. He

turned down offers of a parliamentary seat, a peerage and a cabinet position in MacDonald's government.

On the left of the party, he was a supporter of the Socialist League. A member of the Labour Party national executive committee from 1937, Laski was chairman of the Labour party for 1945-6. Laski wrote about 20 books on political theory and practice, including classic textbooks: *A Grammar of Politics*, *The State in Theory and Practice*, *Liberty in the Modern State*, *Karl Marx, Communism, authority in the Modern State*, *Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham*. Attlee considered Laski to be an unhelpful critic. Laski died in 1951. There are biographies of Laski by Isaac Kramnick and Barry Sherman (1993) and by Michael Newman (also 1993).



Harold Laski

*"We cannot hope to achieve the democratisation of economic power if those who now and control property, especially in the era of the giant corporation, are in a position thereby either to acquire special privilege or to act in an arbitrary way. It is difficult to see how we can prevent the growth of these habits unless the vital instruments of production are owned and controlled by the community as a whole directly in its own interest. For there is no other way in which we can end that economics of scarcity which is inescapably involved in the psychology of large-scale capitalism, especially where its basis is monopolistic".*

*"I do not think this means the necessity of taking over all industry and agriculture by the state. Rather, I think, it means that the bases of economic power shall be in the hands of the community; once they are assured to the interest of the many instead of the few, the economic future can develop within the framework defined by the possession of these fundamental bases by the historic methods of parliamentary democracy. These are four of these bases."*

*"The most vital is the control of the supply of capital and credit. This means the nationalisation of the Bank of England, the joint stock banks, of the insurance companies, and of the building societies. There is no other way to be sure that investment is directly and continuously related to public need and not to private profit."*

*"The state must own and control land. This is essential for three purposes. It is essential for the proper planning of towns, especially the blitzed areas. It is essential*

*to secure for agriculture the proper place in our national economy. It is essential to secure both the proper location of industry and the preservation of the aesthetic amenities of Britain."*

*There must be state control of the import and export trade. This control is obviously vital to any planned production which has the interest of the consumer in view.... "Without it, clearly, we cannot hope to fit our national economy into that international control of exchanges which is now inevitable...."*

*"There must, further, be state ownership and control of transport, fuel and power.... Without the nationalisation of shipping we cannot relate the service to the best results obtainable by state control of imports and exports. Without the nationalisation of railways and road transport, there is ... unnecessary duplication and competition....To leave aviation in private hands, after our wartime experience, is obviously impossible.... The nationalisation of coal mines is a psychological necessity ..on experience , it is the only way in which scientific exploitation of coal by-products can be attempted on an adequate scale.... The case for the national ownership of electric power is the simple one... that without the unification which national ownership will bring, rural electricity, so urgent in the rural areas and for agricultural development, will remain impossible without large subsidies to a mass of separate companies. The same is true of gas and water supplies...."*

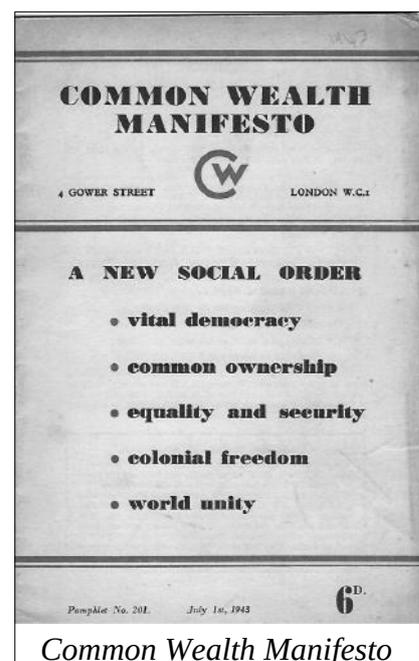
*"It is impossible to entrust functions of this importance to men... who have a direct interest in both the present and the future of the industries they control. In the new system, the sole allegiance of the controller must be to the state he serves."*

## **OUR HISTORY 78**

### **Common Wealth Manifesto (1943)**

The Common Wealth Party was a Christian socialist political party founded in July 1942, by the alliance of two left wing groups, the 1941 Committee, supported by *Picture Post* and J B Priestley, Spanish Civil War veteran and Communist Tom Wintringham and the neo-Christian Forward March movement led by Liberal MP for Barnstable, Richard Acland.

It appealed to egalitarian sentiments and hence aimed to be more appealing to Labour's potential voters, rather than voters leaning Conservative. Common Wealth stood for three principles: Common Ownership, Morality in



Politics and Vital Democracy. Disagreeing with the electoral pact established with other parties in the wartime coalition, key figures in the 1941 Committee began sponsoring independent candidates in by-elections under the banner of the Nine Point Group.

Following the electoral success of Tom Driberg in Maldon with this support in 1942, there was a move to form the Committee into a political party, through a merger with Forward March. Led by Sir Richard Acland, Vernon Bartlett, Priestley, and Wintringham, the group called for common ownership, "vital democracy" and morality in politics. Its programme of common ownership echoed that of the Labour Party but stemmed from a more idealistic perspective, later termed "libertarian socialist". It came to reject the state-dominated form of socialism adopted by Labour under the influence of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, increasingly aligning itself instead with co-operative, syndicalist and guild socialist traditions.

Vernon Bartlett was elected as an independent in Bridgwater in 1942. Common Wealth intervention in by-elections allowed a radicalising electorate to return socialist candidates in Conservative heartlands, in Eddisbury, Skipton and Chelmsford. In the 1945, general election, Commonwealth held the Chelmsford seat, but the MP, Ernest Millington, joined Labour in 1946. Before the 1945 election, Commonwealth had asked the Labour Party to let it have a free run in 40 seats, a proposal rejected by the latter. Acland joined the Labour Party as did Driberg. Bartlett kept his seat as an Independent. Very little has been written about Commonwealth. A 1968 PhD by Angus Calder has never been published. Vincent Geoghegan's 2011 book *Religion and Socialism: Roads to Commonwealth* is a study of four radicals who were involved in the party. The Commonwealth Party had little significant impact after 1946 and was finally closed down in 1993.

*"The age that is ending is based on competition between men and nations. It was the age of capitalism and monopoly, nationalism and imperialism. It has greatly increased the productive capacity of the world: built railways; grown cotton; dug coal. It has also built slums; grown hatred; dug graves for two generations of youth. It was not without value in its growth and flowering, but it is now outgrown and decayed. The beliefs and forms of authority that shaped it are today shackles on humanity.*

*"Our proposals, we gladly admit, do not make sense in terms of the ideas of the City or the Foreign Office. They cannot be understood by those who think that if all men and nations pursue their own interests, universal prosperity and good will must result. Our programme is based on completely different ideas. We say that it is no*

*use patching up a way of living that has changed into a way of death. We believe the British people will not turn back towards the old world; they will pioneer towards a new social order.*

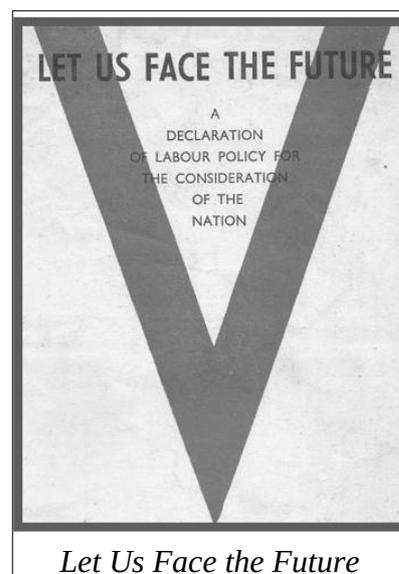
*"In this new social order: Fellowship will replace competition as the driving force in our community. Co-operation with our fellows, not the pursuit of self-interest, will be the driving force in the lives of men and women. Life will come before property.*

*"A society built on these principles will be inspired by vital democracy, a democracy which is a living freedom, not dead, formal or buried in red tape. Work, responsibility and wealth will have to be shared according to the needs and abilities of all men, women and children. Today this means the common ownership of the great productive resources, with democracy in industry as well as in politics. "There will have to be security and equality for all citizens. There will have to be colonial freedom and an advance to war."*

## **OUR HISTORY 79**

### ***Let Us Face the Future (1945)***

*Let Us Face the Future* was the Labour Party's manifesto for the 1945 General Election. It was the product of extensive discussions within the party and beyond on Britain's post-war future. At the time of the publication, Germany had been defeated but Britain was still at war with Japan. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were still in the future. Labour withdrew from the wartime coalition to fight the election: Attlee had been deputy prime minister; Morrison had been Home Secretary; Bevin had been Minister of Labour, so leading Labour MPs had had extensive experience of government. Morrison had overall responsibility for the preparation of the manifesto, which was drafted by Michael Young who was Labour Party head of research, having before the war directed the political and economic planning think tank. Young later helped found the Open University, the Consumers Association and the Institute for Community Studies, later becoming Lord Young of Dartington and a founder of the Social Democratic Party's Tawney Society. Young also published in 1947 *Labour's Plan for Plenty*, just as budget cuts were beginning to bite. Young also wrote a series of discussion papers for the Labour Party, including *Small Man; Big World*, which a critique of a centralised welfare state, and *For Richer, for Poorer* on socialist values in a consumerist society. The best study of wartime domestic policy making is Paul



Addison's 1997 study: *The Road to 1945*. Stephen Brooke's 1992 book on *Labour's War* is also useful on the party's wartime policy development. There is also a biography of Young by Asa Briggs. Young commented on his initial draft of the manifesto, "It is neither necessary or desirable for the document to be too long, too detailed, or to get much beyond what can be done in the full lifetime of a single Parliament...We require a document that is both broad and clear- constituting a straight challenge from the Left – and which will strike the average elector as good sense."

*"Britain's coming Election will be the greatest test in our history of the judgment and common sense of our people. The nation wants food, work and homes. It wants more than that – it wants good food in plenty; useful work for all, and comfortable, labour-saving homes that take full advantage of the resources of modern science and productive industry. It wants a high and rising standard of living, security for all against a rainy day, an educational system which will give every boy and girl a chance to develop the best that is in them.*

*"The Labour Party stands for freedom- for freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the Press. The Labour Party will see to it that we keep and enlarge these freedoms, and that we enjoy again the personal civil liberties we have, of our own free will, sacrificed to win the war. The freedom of Trade Unions must also be restored. But there are certain so-called freedoms that Labour will not tolerate: freedom to exploit other people; freedom to pay poor wages and to push up prices for selfish profit; freedom to deprive the people of the means of living full, happy, healthy lives.*

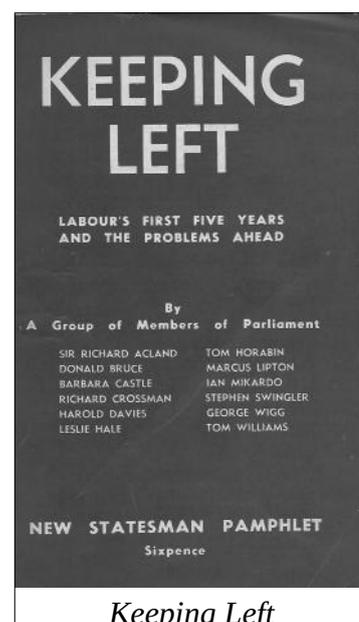
*"All parties say so – the Labour Party means it. For the Labour Party is prepared to achieve it by drastic policies of re-planning and by keeping affirm constructive hand on our whole productive machinery; the Labour Party will put the community first and the sectional interests of private business after. Labour will plan from the ground up – giving an appropriate place to constructive enterprise and private endeavour in the national plan, but dealing decisively with those interests which would use high-sounding talk about economic freedom to cloak their determination to put themselves and their wishes above those of the whole nation.*

*"We appeal to all men and women of progressive outlook, and who believe in constructive change, to support the Labour Party."*

## OUR HISTORY 80

### **Keeping Left (1950)**

The Keep Left group was formed in January 1947 by a group of left-wing backbench Labour MPs group round the *New Statesmen* journal. Their first pamphlet, *Keep Left*, was published in May 1947, edited by Richard Crossman, Michael Foot and Ian Mikardo, but signed by 12 other MPs. In the preface, it stated that "we are convinced that the Movement is in the mood for plain speaking. Our 'red paper' tries to carry on from where the government White Papers left off." The paper concluded with a twenty-point programme covering economic policy, manpower management and industrial democracy and international policy with a focus on Europe, relations with the USSR, the Middle East and African decolonisation. In 1950, a second



pamphlet was published – *Keeping Left* – reflecting on 5 years of Labour government. This was signed by 12 MPs, including Crossman and Mikardo, Richard Acland and Barbara Castle. The action programme now had 30 points – 10 on foreign policy and defence; 6 on 'towards the world fair deal' and 14 on 'what to do at home', concluding with the case for a 'more vital democracy' taken from the 1943 Common Wealth manifesto, no doubt reflecting Richard Acland's membership of the Keeping Left group.

The fullest study of Keep Left and other left pressure groups under the 1946-51 governments is Jonathan Scheer's 1988 study *Labour's Conscience*. The development of the Bevanite left into the 1950s and the role of *Tribune*, *Victory for Socialism* and the hard-left *Socialist Fellowship* is covered in Mark Jenkins's 1979 *Bevanism: Labour's High Tide*. A study of the Tribune Group by N H Twitchell was published in 1988.

*"The lesson for the next five years is clear. Socialism cannot be achieved from the top by mere legislation. There will be many more Bills to pass, but, by and large, the Government already possesses on paper most of the powers it requires to create the framework for a socialist community. The next steps are: i) to make the paper powers effective powers for the planning of our mixed economy, and ii) to enlarge the freedom, and with it the responsibility, of the common man, so that he can participate more fully in the decisions which affect his life at work and at home. For socialism is a two-way process. It does not, like communism, mean transferring the economic*

*power of the all-powerful capitalist to an all-powerful Party, and so creating full employment and fair shares by direction and decree. It means distributing economic power between three groups: i) the democratic representatives in Parliament and on the local authorities; ii) enlightened management; and iii) the workers themselves. That is why, as we shall see, Socialism demands great changes in the outlook not only of the managerial class, but of the Trades Unions and the Co-operative Movement. The dirty clothes of capitalism are unsuitable for a socialist community. Not only management, but the labour movement itself, must be transformed to fulfil their new roles."*

## **OUR HISTORY 81**

### ***Aims and Tasks of Democratic Socialism (1951)***

This is the founding document of the reconstituted Socialist International. The document was adopted by the first post-war congress held in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany between 30 June and 3 July 1951. The Congress chair was Morgan Phillips who was general secretary of the Labour Party. Phillips's memoirs of his time in both roles was published by Spokesman and reviewed in *Chartist*. It was drafted by Denis Healey, who was at that time International Secretary of the British Labour Party. Healey had been active member of the Communist Party while a student at Oxford University in the late 1930s. He served during the Second World War, rising to the rank of Major and acting as beachmaster for the landings at Anzio in central Italy. In his Labour Party role, Healey had responsibility for liaison with European socialist parties exiled in London and for supporting socialist parties in Eastern Europe which was falling increasingly under Soviet domination. Healey became an anti-communist and vigorous advocate of democratic socialism.

In 1947 he published a pamphlet for the Labour Party attacking communism – *Cards on the Table*. In 1951, Healey edited a book, *The Curtain Falls*, which told the story of the elimination of the socialist parties in Eastern Europe. The book included a foreword by Aneurin Bevan and contributions from socialists in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Entering Parliament in 1952, Healey became Minister of Defence in Wilson's 1964 Government, and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1974-79 and deputy leader of the Labour Party 1980-1983, having defeated Tony Benn. Healey was a leading advocate of NATO, nuclear defence and a joint Anglo-American foreign policy. Healey received a life peerage in 1992 and died in 2017 at the age of 98.



*A young Denis Healey.*

The Aims and Tasks statement includes an extensive Preamble and sections on Political Democracy, Economic Democracy, Social Democracy and Cultural Progress and International Democracy. The full statement is published as an appendix in the third volume of Julius Braunthal's *History of the International: World Socialism 1943-1968* (Gollancz, 1980).

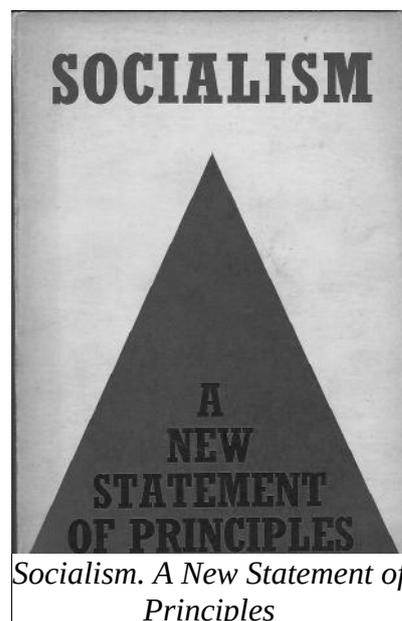
#### *POLITICAL DEMOCRACY*

- 1. Socialists strive to build a new society in freedom and by democratic means.*
- 2. Without freedom there can be no Socialism. Socialism can be achieved only through democracy. Democracy can be fully realized only through Socialism.*
- 3. Democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people. It must secure:*
  - a) The right of every human being to a private life, protected from arbitrary invasion by the state;*
  - b) Political liberties, like freedom of thought, expression, education, organization and religion;*
  - c) The representation of the people through free elections, under universal, equal and secret franchise;*
  - e) The equality before the law of all citizens, whatever their birth, sex, language, creed and colour;*
  - f) Right to cultural autonomy for groups with their own language;*
  - g) An independent judiciary system; everyone must have the right to a public trial before an impartial tribunal by due process of law.*
- 4. Socialists have always fought for the rights of man. The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man which has been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations must be made effective in every country.*
- 5. Democracy requires the right of more than one party to exist and the right of opposition. But democracy has the right and duty to protect itself against those who exploit its opportunities only to destroy it. The defence of political democracy is a vital interest of the people. Its preservation is a condition of realizing economic and social democracy.*
- 6. Policies based on the protection of capitalist interests cannot develop the strength and unity needed to defend democracy from totalitarian attack. Democracy can only be defended with the active help of the workers, whose fate depends on its survival.*
- 7. Socialists express their solidarity with all peoples suffering under dictatorship, whether Fascist or Communist, in their efforts to win freedom.*
- 8. Every dictatorship, wherever it may be, is a danger to the freedom of all nations and thereby to the peace of the world. Wherever there is unrestrained exploitation of forced labour, whether under private profit or under political dictatorship, there is a danger to the living and moral standards of all the peoples."*

## OUR HISTORY 82

### **Socialist Union: *Socialism. A New Statement of Principles* (1952)**

Socialist Union was established in 1951 by contributors to the *Socialist Commentary* journal, which had been edited by Rita Hinden and other 'reformist' Labour Party members since 1946. The group had previously operated under the name 'Socialist Vanguard', having been initiated by a group of socialist exiles from Germany in the early 1930s. Hinden was a Jewish South African and Zionist who, having completed a thesis on the colonisation of Palestine, moved to London to become secretary of the Fabian Colonial Bureau in 1940, working closely with Arthur Creech Jones, its chair, who was to become colonial minister in 1945. Hinden contributed to a large number of pamphlets and books on colonial policy, mainly focusing on the case for African decolonisation. In 1950, Hinden left the Fabian Colonial Bureau to focus on his role as editor of *Socialist Commentary*. The chairman of both Socialist Union and *Socialist Commentary* was the industrial relations academic, Allan Flanders, who had been a member of the Socialist Vanguard group before the war. The journal and organisation were revisionist in the sense that they considered Marxist concepts of class struggle outdated, argued for a new social democratic response to the post-war world and increasing affluence especially among the middle classes, supported political pluralism and a mixed economy. The group was in effect proto-Gaitskellite (Hugh Gaitskell was treasurer of the friends of *Socialist Commentary*) and picked up many of the concepts from the pre-war works of Evan Durbin, Douglas Jay and Hugh Dalton, many of which were to reappear in Crosland's *Future of Socialism* when it was published in 1956. The group also reflected the Christian ethical tradition of R H Tawney, and Hinden edited Tawney's posthumous essays, published as *The Radical Tradition* in 1964. The *Socialist Commentary* editorial board included two MPs: Fred Mulley and Kenneth Younger. The Socialist Union group involved a number of MPs including Alf Robens (later chairman of the National Coal Board), Jim Griffiths (deputy Labour Party leader) and Philip Noel-Baker. The group published three pamphlets: *The Statement of Principle* in 1952, *Socialism and Foreign Policy* in 1953 and *Twentieth Century Socialism*, edited by Hinden and Flanders, in 1956. All publications were issued on



behalf of the group and contributors were not named. The group does not seem to have survived beyond 1956.

*"1. The socialist goal is a society so organised as to provide each one of its members with an equal opportunity for the development and expression of personality. This is the right of everyone, and institutions should be shaped accordingly. But the human personality will not find its full expression unless men are able to live in freedom and fellowship, that is in the exercise of responsibility and in the spirit of service. These are ideals which give value to human existence and the degree to which they are expressed will determine the quality of the society we hope to build.*

*2. This conception of society has from the start been the ethical inspiration of the socialist movement, the deeper reason for its opposition to the exploitation of man by man. It is, course, a conception of an ideal society which will never be wholly attained. But providing we make it our conscious goal and are not content to regard its coming as inevitable, we can advance towards it. To achieve this advance is the essence of socialist action.*

*3. Socialism, in this sense, cannot be expressed in any single pattern of institutions; nor does its realisation depend on any one line of political strategy. It does, however, involve a continuous struggle in various ways to change the class structure of society and the power relationships on which the class structure rests. In this struggle the labour movement, composed mainly of the organisations of the under-privileged classes, is the natural vehicle."*

## **OUR HISTORY 83**

### **Anthony Crosland: *The Future of Socialism* (1956)**

Crosland was one of a group of Oxford educated intellectuals, sponsored by Hugh Dalton, which included Roy Jenkins and Denis Healey, who sought to revise and transform socialist theory from its pre-war Marxist basis to a post-Marxist social democratic position. This was predicated on the belief that Britain was entering a period of relative affluence and that the Marxist premise of class struggle over economic value was no longer relevant. At university, Crosland had established a Democratic Socialist Club to counter the Communist dominated Labour Society. Crosland was elected to Parliament in 1950, where together with fellow 'revisionists'



he supported Hugh Gaitskell. In 1965 Crosland was appointed education secretary in Wilson's first government, moving on to President of the Board of Trade and Secretary of State for the Environment, becoming Foreign Secretary in 1976. He died in 1977. He wrote a number of books and sets of essays, including *Socialism Now* (1962) and *The Conservative Enemy* (1974).

*"Socialists in the 1930s, whatever their disagreements on long term questions, were united on the immediate objectives of a majority Labour government. These were first the abolition of poverty and the creation of a social service state; secondly a greater equalization of wealth; and thirdly, economic planning for full employment and stability."*

*"Marxism was the dominant intellectual influence, and it made a profound impact on my generation of socialists in their formative years before the war.... Marx has little or nothing to offer the contemporary socialist, either in respect of practical policy, or of the correct analysis of our society, or even of the right conceptual tools or framework. His prophesies have been almost without exception falsified , and his conceptual tools are now quite inappropriate."*

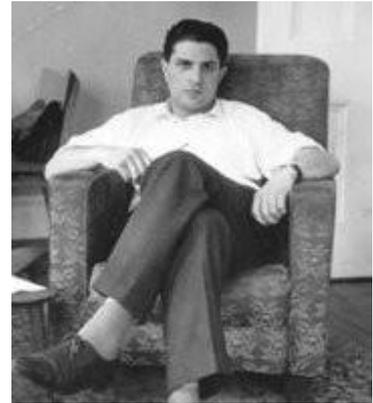
*"As our traditional objectives are gradually fulfilled, and society becomes more social-democratic with the passing of the old injustices, we shall turn our attention increasingly to freedom, happiness, and cultural endeavour; the cultivation of leisure, beauty, grace, gaiety, excitement, and of all the proper pursuits, whether elevated, vulgar or eccentric, which contribute to the varied fabric of a full private and family life."*

*"There are, after all, not one, but two good reasons for being a reformer, and on the Left. The first is a belief in the benefits of socialism. But there are many changes in society which an idealistic reformer might wish to make, but which are not set to be assumed under any defensible definition of socialism. And one is also on the Left, and a Labour supporter, because as a matter of experience most of those advocating such changes are to be found on the Left, and those opposing them on the Right.... I would like to see action taken both to widen opportunities for enjoyment and relaxation, and to diminish existing restrictions on personal freedom. ... We do not want to enter the age of abundance, only to find that we have lost the values which might teach us how to enjoy it."*

## OUR HISTORY 84

### Ralph Miliband: *Parliamentary Socialism* (1961)

Miliband was a Marxist sociologist and political scientist who contributed to the development of socialist theory within the New Left in the 1960s. A Polish Jew, he fled to England from Belgium in 1940. After studying at the LSE and wartime service, he taught in Chicago before returning to the LSE as a political science lecturer in 1949. Joining the Labour Party in 1951, he collaborated with E P Thompson and John Saville, editors of the *New Reasoner* and later with the *New Left Review*. His first book, a historical critique of the Labour Party, *Parliamentary Socialism*, was published



Ralph Miliband

in 1961. He later published *The State in Capitalist Society* (1969), *Marxism and Politics* (1977), *Capitalist Democracy in Britain* (1982), *Class Power and State Power* (1983), *Divided Societies: Class Struggle in Contemporary Capitalism* (1989) and (posthumously) *Socialism for a Sceptical Age* (1994). An activist as well as a theoretician, having left the Labour Party, he founded *Socialist Register* with John Saville in 1964 and from 1981 was an active participant in the Socialist Society, with Raymond Williams and *New Left Review* contributors such as Tariq Ali, Michael Rustin and Hilary Wainwright, which was based on the concept that an education and research organisation could bring together Marxists within and outside the Labour Party. The Socialist Society sponsored a series of conferences in Chesterfield, in which Tony Benn featured prominently, who was by then MP for the area. Miliband was also a signatory to Charter 88, which advocated constitutional and electoral reform. He died in 1994. A biography by Michael Newman, *Ralph Miliband and the Politics of the New Left* was published in 2002 by Merlin Press. The following extract is taken from the final chapter of *Parliamentary Socialism* titled *The Sickness of Labourism*.

*"One of the reasons why Labour leaders have always repudiated the class character of the Labour Party has been their fear that to admit the fact, and to act upon it, would antagonise 'floating voters'. So, in many cases it no doubt has, but there is nothing to suggest that a multitude of men and women, who are not of the working classes, have in the past found the class character of the Labour Party a bar to their support for it, or that support for it would wane if its leaders were to adapt their policies to that fact."*

*"The reverse is more likely to be true. For while Labour leaders have felt that the 'affluent society' required more urgently than ever that their party should appear 'classless', profound unease with that society has grown apace far outside trade union ranks. If trade union radicalism in recent years is a sign of this unease, the radicalism to be found in a new generation is surely another. While lamentations have been loud at the supposed political apathy of youth, a multitude of young men and women have found in the threat of nuclear war and a host of other issues a basis of commitment for transcending the orthodoxies of Labourism. It is only 1 comparison with the mythical thirties that the fifties, or at least the late fifties, have been years of political disengagement. The comparison with the real thirties is not to the detriment of these past years. The real difference is that the fifties have often appeared to lack the political instrumentalities of radical change. And to this impression, a consolidating Labour Party, revisionist in practice if not in theory, has greatly contributed. If politics in the fifties have seemed a decreasingly meaningful activity, void of substance, heedless of principle, and rich in election auctioneering, the responsibility is not only that of the hidden or overt persuaders; it is also, and to a major degree, that of Labour's leaders."*

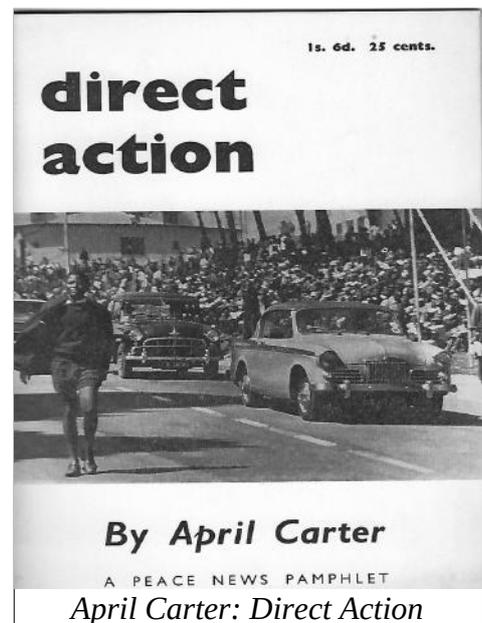
## **OUR HISTORY 85**

### **April Carter: *Direct Action* (1961)**

April Carter was secretary of the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear War from 1958 to 1961, having previously studied politics at the LSE and working in the Foreign Office. Organiser of many of the early CND protests, Carter was arrested at the Swatham nuclear base in 1959, before becoming one of the co-founders in 1960 of the Committee of 100 for civil disobedience. She then became European organiser for the March from San Francisco to Moscow before joining the editorial staff of *Peace News*. In 1968, she protested against the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. Moving into academia, she lectured at a number of universities, before joining the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute from 1985 to 1987. In the 1980s she was a member of the Alternative Defence Commission.

Carter has published a number of books: *The Political Theory of Anarchism* (1971), *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy* (1973), *Authority and Democracy* (1979), *Politics of Women's Rights* (1988), *Success and Failure in Arms Control Negotiations* (1989), *Peace Movements* (1992), *the Political Theory of Global Citizenship* (2001) *Direct Action and Democracy Today* (2004) and *People Power and Political Change* (2012).

"A democratic society has two main elements. One is a constitutional and legal framework that safeguards individual and minority rights and allows for some measure of popular control. The other is the practice of their democratic rights by the people. Of these two elements the latter is the more important, since even an ideal constitution cannot operate effectively unless the people take their political duties seriously; merely to keep it functioning mechanically a system dependent on elections has to rely on its citizens bothering to vote. Moreover, the forms of democracy may be used to disguise the realities of political power; the ballot box may be a popular symbol of democracy but is no guarantee of it. The methods on non-violent action are not concerned with the forms of democracy; they are the means of creating or defending the spirit of it, and of putting it into practice where the 'normal constitutional channels' either do not exist or are inadequate."



"Non-violent action is a method of maintaining the values inherent in the idea of democracy – values which are more crucial to its reality than such forms as a general election every five years. It is therefore a compliment to the forms of democracy as devised by liberal theory, not a negation of them. Genuinely democratic society may perhaps emerge from the inter-action of law and the constitution on the one hand, and protest and non-violent action on the other. The principles basic to non-violence are closely related to the principles of democracy: direct action methods are realising both."

## **OUR HISTORY 86**

### **Perry Anderson: *Problems of Socialist Strategy* (1965)**

This essay was published in *Towards Socialism*, a book issued by *New Left Review*. Other contributors were Thomas Balogh, Robin Blackburn, Ken Coates, Richard Crossman, Andre Gorz, Tom Nairn, Richard Titmuss, John Westergaard and Raymond Williams. Anderson and Blackburn were joint editors. Anderson was editor of the *New Left Review*, having succeeded the first editor, Stuart Hall. The review was a bi-monthly journal founded in 1960 as a merger of the *New Reasoner* (edited by E P Thomson and John Saville) and the *Universities and Left Review*. The *New Reasoner* had been published by a group of Communist dissidents, often referred to as the 'first New Left'. The *Universities and Left Review* had been the journal of a

group of young Oxford University Marxist academics such as Stuart Hall, Gabriel Pearson, Raphael Samuel and Charles Taylor.

*Towards Socialism* was the New Left Review's first book, published by Fontana, and attracted contributions from a wider range of academics, for example, Richard Crossman, a Minister in the Wilson government and former leading figure in the Keep Left group, was not a member of the *New Left Review* editorial board and his essay 'The lessons of 1945' had previously been published in the *New Statesman*. Balogh was economic adviser to Harold Wilson. Titmuss was Professor of Social Administration at the LSE, where John Westergaard was a sociology lecturer. Raymond Williams, an English lecturer at Cambridge, had already published *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution*. A history of the *New Left Review* has been published as *Pessimism of the Intellect?* by Duncan Thompson in 2007. A study of Perry Anderson, *Marxism and the New Left* was published by Paul Blackledge in 2004. The *New Left Review* journal is still published as a bi-monthly: <https://newleftreview.org/>



Perry Anderson

The editors' introduction to *Towards Socialism* set out the book's two basic ideas: 'that the advent of political democracy in Britain has not created a true equality of power in British society', and that 'socialism in rich societies of the West must move beyond the traditional preoccupations of the labour movement, towards a political programme which conceives men in their entirety, and tries to liberate them in their whole social life'.

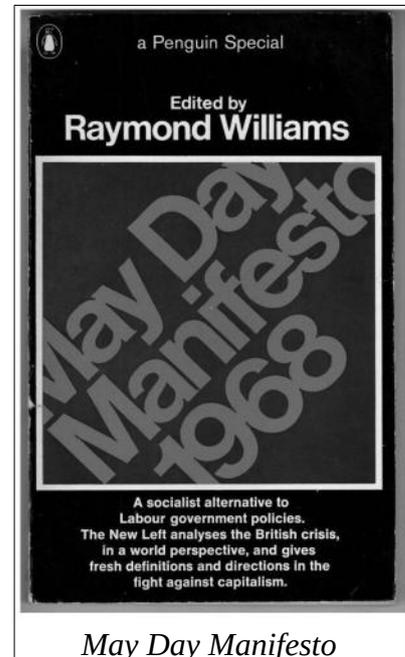
*"The Left in Britain has always been open to the damaging accusation that it lacks any strategic perspective. It is difficult to deny the charge. The Left has never, historically, been able to offer a convincing or coherent answer to the question: how is socialism to be achieved? It is striking that in all the debates and conflicts of the fifties, strategic arguments proper played almost no role at all. All sections of the Left were alike in this: the basis of their politics was a moral critique of society, disassociated from the complex historical process in which values can alone ultimately find incarnation. This attitude, with all its characteristic strengths and weaknesses, has been a hallmark of the British Left since the foundation of the ILP. Its best thinkers - Morris, Tawney, Cole- have never departed from this tradition. Today, however, it has become urgent to surpass it. The lack of any strategic perspective has been one of the key reasons for the eclipse of the Left since 1961 – its swift and sudden effacement before the rise of Wilson. For Wilson above all has offered a strategy to the Labour Party – it is this that has enabled him to temporarily*

*cancel the divisions within it and dominate the party. A strategy for the Labour Party as it exists today, however, is one thing; a strategy for socialism is another. It is precisely in this that so much difficulty lies."*

## **OUR HISTORY 87**

### **May Day Manifesto (1968)**

The original draft of the manifesto was published in 1967 and revised for publication as a book by Penguin the following year. The original manifesto was produced by a working group of socialists associated with the *New Left Review*, who described themselves as 'intellectual socialists working in universities, technical colleges, schools and research institutions', under three editors: Edward Thompson, Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams. The revised version, building on extended discussion within a set of specialist working groups, was edited by Raymond Williams. The manifesto sought first to analyse social realities within the context of the 'new international capitalism and a new kind of imperialism which are at the roots not only of the British economic crisis, but of the world political crisis and the realities and dangers of war'. The extracts below are taken from the section on 'Two Meanings of Social Democracy' and from the final section on 'The Politics of the Manifesto'.



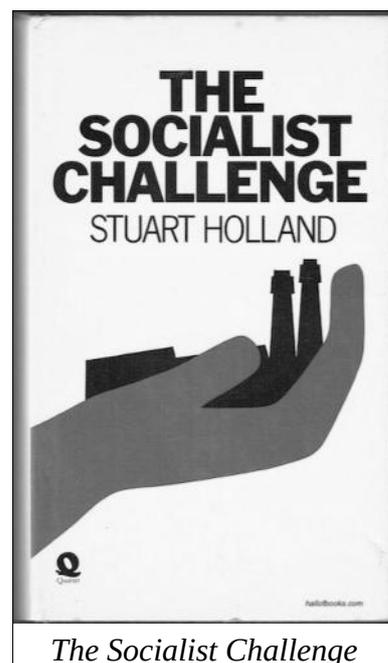
*"It has always been argued that the critical choice, for a socialist, is between a programme of violent change – the capture of state power – and a programme of electoral change – the winning of a majority in Parliament. Tactics, values, organisation seem to hang on that choice; the shape of a future society is prefigured by the road we choose.... Socialists can no longer go on restricting their view of socialist advance to the achievement of more powerful Labour majorities in parliament. With no other political strategy but the winning of a parliamentary majority, it is as a movement, with its habitual forms of activity geared solely to the electoral process, acquiescing in the precise mechanisms which are intended to contain it.... If the party becomes real, as a campaigning democratic institution, it is at once a focus of genuinely alternative power.... It is not in the obsolete perspective of the choice between 'revolution' and 'evolution' but in the actual perspective of the choice between a political movement and an electoral machine, that we have to look, in Britain, at the situation and condition of the Labour Party."*

*"We believe that the Left should develop its own Socialist National Plan, moving from an increased solidity of defence to detailed developments and proposals... We reject consensus politics, but that necessary hardening must go along with a new flexibility, where the real opposition is already formed and forming. We look forward to making certain specific connections, in campaigns and in publications. We want to ask members of the major single-issue campaigns and of the existing organisations of the Labour movement to discuss with us and others the bearings of their own urgent work on the whole analysis we have offered... We want to connect with what is still strong in Britain: a democratic practice, a determined humanity, an active critical intelligence... What we are seeking to define is an active socialism of the immediately coming generation; an emerging political process rather than the formalities of a process that is already, as democratic practice, beginning to break up and disappear. We are looking to the political structure of the rest of the century, rather than to the form which now embody the past and confuse recognition of the present. This manifesto is a challenge, and it asks for a response."*

## **OUR HISTORY 88**

### **Stuart Holland: *The Socialist Challenge* (1975)**

Stuart Holland was an Oxford educated economist, with degrees in history and economics, who on graduating worked with the economist Thomas Balogh and then in the cabinet office for Harold Wilson in 1964. After a research fellowship at Sussex University, in 1974 he became advisor to Judith Hart, the Minister for International Development. In 1972 he had published a study of 'The State as Entrepreneur'. This led to his involvement in developing the Labour Party's economic strategy while Labour was in opposition, submitting a number of papers to the National Executive Committee and its sub-committees, with many of his ideas being incorporated into the Labour Programme 1973 and the manifesto for the February 1974 election. In 1979, Holland was elected as



MP for Vauxhall in London. He stood down in 1989 to return to academia, moving to the European University Institute in Florence. Having taught at a range of universities and written numerous books and articles, Holland, now 81, is a visiting professor at the University of Coimbra in Portugal.

Holland challenged the mixed economy perspective presented by Anthony Crosland in his *Future of Socialism* and subsequent works, which dominated Labour Party economic thinking until the early 1970s. Holland was influenced by the French experience of economic planning and the Belgian socialist Prime Minister Paul Henri Spaak and President of the European Steel and Coal Community and was involved in the development of Labour Party policy on the Common Market in the 1960s and the development of the Treaty of Rome. He now focuses mainly on European and international economics. He has maintained an interest in international development, having served as shadow minister between 1983 and 1987, under Neil Kinnock's leadership. He has written a book on Eritrea.

*The Socialist Challenge*, published in 1975, set out the theoretical basis and the programme that was to become known as the Alternative Economic Strategy. At the time the Labour Party NEC and the shadow cabinet were dominated by a left-wing group which included Tony Benn, Ian Mikardo, Eric Heffer, Judith Hart and Albert Booth. Tony Benn as Secretary of State for Industry tried to implement the strategy, but was moved to Energy Secretary where he had less influence. The story of the rise and fall of the new economic policy is told in John Medhurst's *That Option No Longer Exists*, published in 2014.

*"What is the socialist challenge? Essentially, it is the claim that we can transform the injustice inequality and inefficiency of modern capitalism. In Britain in the early 1970's the Labour Party shaped a radical new strategy for the beginnings of such transformation. The programme for extended public ownership, strategic planning and workers' democracy opened the feasibility of a genuine transition to socialism in a democratic society. For the first time since the immediate post-war period, the socialist challenge moved from theory to the politics of a mass party in government."*

*"The main dimensions of Labour's socialist challenge include not only a penetration of the commanding heights of the modern capitalism in the meso-economic sector, but also a simultaneous transformation of the prevailing class structures which concentrate economic and social power in the hands of a largely self-perpetuating oligarchy. This can never be a complete or final process. There is no socialist utopia at the end of a specific programme for transformation."*

*"Socialism is the creation of a society in which it is easier to secure self-fulfilment through serving society than through the exclusive pursuit of self alone. .. It is a society in which people are both practical and idealists."*

*"Progress to socialism should be an on-going process, but one in which the critical centres of capitalist power and class were transformed by a socialist*

*government, backed by the trade unions. It is a key premise of this analysis that such transformation can be achieved through democratic processes. Without such democratic change, transition to socialism could prove less a controlled transition in the public interest, an explosion of social resentment and political counter-reaction challenging freedoms which are rightly held dear even in an economically unjust society. On the other hand, such democratic reforms must be effectively revolutionary in character. In other words, they must reverse the current dominance of capitalist mods of production and capitalist motivation into a dominance of democratically controlled socialism. They must transform capitalist society rather than try ineffectively to alleviate its implicit injustice."*

## **OUR HISTORY 89**

### **Tony Benn: *Arguments for Socialism* (1979)**

Tony Benn, previously known as Anthony Wedgwood Benn, was a Minister in Wilson's 1964-70 and 1974-7 governments and in Callaghan's 1977-9 government. He was at various times Postmaster General, Minister for Technology, Minister for Industry, and Minister for Energy. He was the son of William Wedgwood Benn, Attlee's Secretary of State for India; his grandfather, John Benn had been a Liberal MP, having been leader of the London County Council. Tony Benn was first elected to Parliament in 1950, succeeding Stafford Cripps in Bristol East. He first came to public attention in 1960 when he had to fight a legal battle to avoid being disbarred from Parliament on inheriting his father's peerage, a precedent which was followed in 1963



Tony Benn

when Lord Home was able to renounce his peerage to become Prime Minister. In 1965, he published a book on *The Regeneration of Britain*, supporting Wilson's vision of a New Britain supported by 'the white heat of technology'.

Benn's experience in government moved him to the left. Interested in the history of ethical socialism, having been sympathetic to the wartime Common Wealth party in his youth, Benn became interested in a more libertarian socialist approach, supporting the syndicalist Institute for Workers Control and the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders workers' cooperative of 1975 and advocating industrial democracy. He opposed EEC membership on the grounds that it involved a loss of sovereignty. Benn became seen as the leader of the left-wing of the party in opposition, standing unsuccessfully against Denis Healey for the deputy leadership in 1981. In 1988, he stood

unsuccessfully against Neil Kinnock for the party leadership. He continued to campaign for democratic reform, supporting a series of Socialist Society conferences in his new constituency of Chesterfield in 1984, when his previous constituency had been abolished. He sat in Parliament until 2001. He opposed the invasion of Iraq and served as president of the Stop the War Coalition from 2001 until his death. He was a regular speaker at anti-war events and at historical commemorations such as Tolpuddle and the Levellers' Day at Burford.

Benn published nine volumes of diaries, detailing his political career in government and opposition. He died in 2014. *Arguments for Socialism*, was published in 1979 just after Labour went into opposition with the election of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister. It was a composition of previous speeches, essays and articles edited by Chris Mullin. A second volume was published in 1981 as *Arguments for Democracy*.

*"Democratic Socialism. This is very much a home-grown British product which has been slowly fashioned over the centuries..... The Labour Party comprises within its ranks representatives of a wide range of opinions. We have been wise enough not to seek to impose a common socialist dogma on anyone. Indeed, our socialism grew out of experience and was not handed down from above, or received from outside. The British Labour Movement was born out of the chapels of dissenters and the struggles of factory workers who campaigned for trade union rights, then for the parliamentary vote, then organised themselves to nominate candidates in a separate Labour Party and finally adopted an explicitly socialist approach, based on a full commitment to a democratic system, and personal freedom."*

*"We too accept that any society requires discipline, though the discipline of the market place and the discipline imposed by the top people are both equally unattractive. We believe that the self-discipline of full democratic control offers our best hope for the future, and is the only real answer to inflation, because it confers real responsibility."*

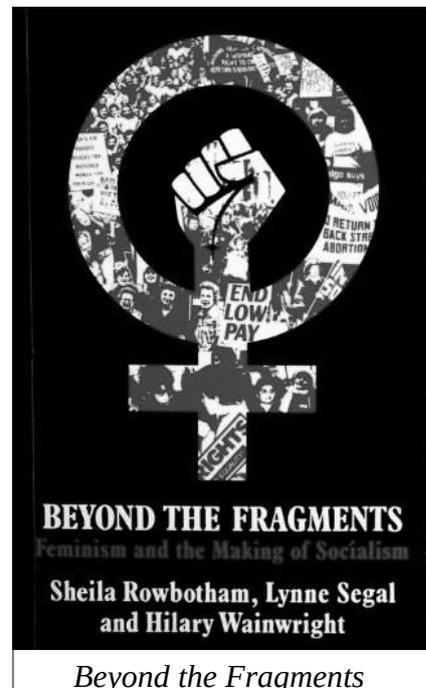
*"The Labour Party has worked on the basis that the investment gap must be filled by public investment, with proper public accountability and public ownership, and that only public expenditure can convert human needs into economic demands able to command resources and help restore full employment. Indeed, we believe that the nation can earn its living efficiently and profitably only if there is a new balance of wealth and power in favour of working people. And to avoid corporatism creeping in as a by-product of these public initiatives we have been working for a wider and deeper accountability of power through greater democratic control by Parliament"*

*and of finance and industry and of the institutions of the Labour Party itself....The next decade will see a growth of democratic socialism against the ideas of monetarism and corporatism."*

## **OUR HISTORY 90**

### **Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright: *Beyond the Fragments* (1979)**

Subtitled 'Feminism and the Making of Socialism' this collective set of essays was a sustained argument for applying the lessons of the experience of the women's movement to the more traditional approach of the male dominated British labour movement to political organisation. Originating in a pamphlet published by the Tyneside Socialist Centre and the Islington Community Press, an expanded version was published by Merlin Press. Adopting a pluralist libertarian socialist approach, the essays draw on a wide range of local experience both within the women's movement and within other issue-based community struggles as well as within the more sectarian revolutionary left. In her introduction, Wainwright pointed out that "our concern in writing this book is with the forms of organisation necessary to develop socialist consciousness out of this grass-roots industrial and social strength." The book was a collaborative product and although there were only three essayists, the pamphlet and the book drew on the experience of a wide range of feminists and libertarian socialists.



*"The way alliances come about will vary with local conditions. Sometimes under the pressure of the onslaught from the Tories and the hopelessness of official campaigns, the local branches of the strongest left-wing organisations or left Constituency Labour Party may set up an alliance in motion. It might break with the normal customs, and making its discussions the forum for socialists, in other smaller organisations or unaligned."*

*"In other areas the experience of successfully working together over some nationally initiated campaign might lead people to establish ways of establishing that unity on a more permanent, wider political basis. Or there might already be some form of unity, a local socialist newspaper, a shared resource centre, a bookshop, socialist club or centre, which can be built on to create a more active political*

*alliance. Whatever the process, the signs are that conditions for such alliances – ad hoc and loose though they may be – are especially favourable at a local level."*

*"Because of the endless postponement of decisive conflicts in the Labour Party; because of the poverty of political debate within most constituency and ward Labour Parties; because of the absence of a mass circulation socialist paper, the left in Britain has not been through a common process of debate on strategy and programme – even of the kind which precedes major splits from socialist and communist parties on the Continent. As a result, there is lack of agreement or even discussion of strategy and programme between any strong groupings at a national level to determine nationally the framework for unity at a local level. At a local and regional level however, there are plenty of opportunities, first, for unity around the major political problems of the day; also around socialist projects like bookshops, socialist trade union information and research centres, resource centres, alternative newspapers. Their success, though, is vital to the creation of a popular socialist party."*

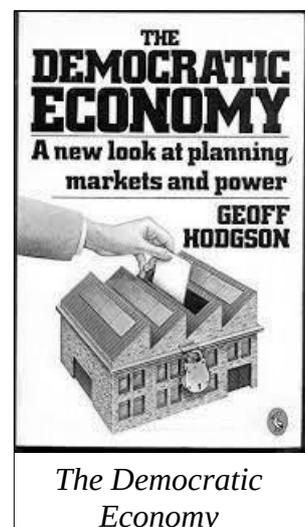
## **OUR HISTORY 91**

### **Geoff Hodgson: *The Democratic Economy* (1984)**

Geoff Hodgson was and remains an academic economist who developed a libertarian socialist approach to economic management. He lectured at Newcastle and Manchester Polytechnics and in the US. In 1981, he published *Labour at the Crossroads*, followed by *Capitalism, Value and Exploitation* in 1982.

Since publishing *The Democratic Economy* in 1984, he has published several further books on economic theory and management, including works on the Italian economist Piero Straffa and *Economics and Utopia*, published in 1999, as well as numerous articles in academic journals. He is currently at Loughborough University and also edits the *Journal of Institutional Economics*, and his most recent book published in 2019 is entitled *Is Socialism Feasible? Towards an Alternative Future*.

Hodgson's 1984 book followed from an increased interest within the Labour Party in democracy within the workplace, which had perhaps not been seen since the guild socialism and shop stewards' movements of the 1920s. There had been a reconsideration of the appropriateness of the centralised Morrisonian model of



managing nationalised industries. In 1977, the Labour Party had published the Bullock Report on Industrial Democracy, which had proposed statutory worker representation on the management boards of firms. This was approved by the Labour Party annual conference in 1969. There were also more radical examples of worker management, notably the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards alternative plan of 1976, the subject of a book by Hilary Wainwright and David Elliott in 1982 (later republished by Spokesman), and the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders 'work in' of 1971 led by Jimmy Reid and other Communist shop stewards.

*"A society based on the fullest extension of popular participation in power, where democracy predominates, and where there is no great inequality in income or wealth, must be a form of socialism. Such a society is incompatible with the concentration of ownership of the means of production in the hands of a small minority, as obtains at present in all Western societies. Thus, in the transition to a democratic economy a threat to some vested interests is unavoidable. But that does not mean that we should not attempt to seek the smoothest possible transition. The orthodox Marxist account sees it a conceivably peaceful but more likely to be violent. This is largely because of the flawed and over-simplified picture of one class removing another from the position of power: the proletariat replaces the bourgeoisie as ruling class in a single revolutionary action. In this rapid and cataclysmic process, the 'ruling class' is bound to resist."*

*"The question is which forces and advances are to be given priority? The traditional socialist answer is to put the main emphasis on reform from the centre: particularly an extension of public ownership and taxation policies to reduce inequality. These matters are important, and they have to be tackled at sometime. But it can be argued that extensions of democracy, participation, decentralisation and autonomy should be pressed for first. To put the matter more strongly, the present terms of debate should be changed from nationalisation versus markets and private enterprise, to the issue of how is democracy to be combined with autonomy. This creates the important possibility of a socialist consensus, which can gain wide popular support, and pose issues in terms which clear the way for the democratic economy."*

*"Thus, the traditional socialist configuration of means and ends is reversed. Instead of democracy being the means to achieve a goal of greater public ownership, public ownership is a means when necessary to achieve greater democracy. It could take a variety of forms, and it should not be conceived as old-style nationalisation. In any case, the pre-existence of a strong and pluralistic movement for democracy,*

*participation and autonomy will help to prevent the emergence of state collectivist forms."*

## OUR HISTORY 92

### **Michael Rustin: *Towards a Pluralist Socialism* (1985)**

At the time this book was written, Rustin was a sociology lecturer at the Polytechnic of North London. He was a contributor to *New Left Review* and a founder member of the Socialist Society.

The Socialist Society was founded in 1981 by a group of British socialists, including Raymond Williams and Ralph Miliband, who founded it as an organisation devoted to socialist education and research, linking the left of the Labour Party with socialists outside it. The Society grew out of the *New Left Review* and many of its active members including Robin Blackburn and Tariq Ali of the International Marxist Group, the Marxist feminist sociologist, Michele Barrett, and Hilary Wainwright as well as Rustin. Other active and prominent members included Richard Kuper of Pluto Press, John Palmer, the *Guardian* foreign editor and the environmentalist Barney Dickson. The Society published a magazine, *Interlink*, later relaunched under the name of *Catalyst*, and a series of pamphlets.



*Michael Rustin*

One of the Society's key goals was overcoming the division on the British Left between socialists inside and outside the Labour Party. To this end, the Society was jointly responsible, with the Conference of Socialist Economists, Tony Benn and the Campaign Group of Labour MPs, for the initiation of a series of conferences between 1987 and 1992 which were held in Chesterfield, Sheffield and Manchester. The Society was opposed to Euroscepticism and open to green politics, all of which were fairly controversial on the left at the time. Several prominent figures involved in the society, including Miliband and Wainwright, were signatories to Charter 88. Another organisational achievement of note was the founding of the Red-Green Network. The Society was wound up in 1993.

Rustin is now a professor at the University of East London. He is a regular contributor to the journal *Soundings*. He has written books on psychoanalysis, children's literature, higher and further education policy and the regeneration of East London. In 1997, Rustin contributed to *The Next Ten Years: Key Issues for Blair's Britain* and the *Kilburn Manifesto* in 2015.

*"Socialists have today to be pluralist, and to acknowledge the diversity of interests and lifestyles which political programmes must reconcile. It is a difficult paradox that radical programmes must now be universalist, in seeking a common definition of social rights and obligations, and pluralist in recognizing unavoidable and indeed desirable differences in social values..... Socialists have to take account of the diversification of the social structure, as well as of the grosser phenomena of class subordination and class conflict more familiar to them from the main socialist and Marxist traditions. There is no possible return in democratic societies to simple prescriptive communities of 'mechanical solidarity', except as one available choice (e.g. a self-sufficient commune) among many. An important dimension of this pluralism is in the moral and cultural domains. The overcoming of scarcity creates the preconditions for an increasing diversity of life activities, whether expressed in the proliferation of specialized fields of knowledge, the practices of new kinds of participatory sport or expressive art, or the development of distinctive kinds of social community."*

*"Such a pluralism need not be merely an anodyne resignation in the face of gross inequities of wealth and power.... Freedom is not only defined in individual terms... choices are socially constructed, and particular ways of life and spheres of value need to be defended from invasion. The one-dimensional values which typically threaten invasion in modern societies are those of capital and monolithic political or religious ideologies. ... The equation of socialism with monochromatic and coercive uniformity bears little relation to what most people in a modern society now want.... A pluralist approach is necessary in terms of the 'broad alliance' strategy required by socialists, as well as for more basic reasons of principle."*

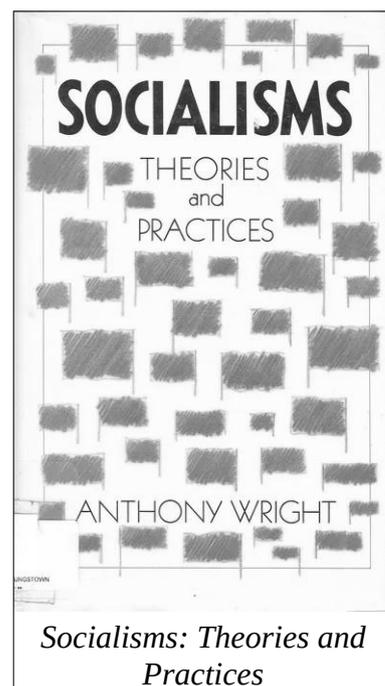
## **OUR HISTORY 93**

### **Anthony Wright: *Socialisms: Theories and Practices* (1986)**

At the time Wright wrote this book, he was a lecturer in political studies at Birmingham University. In 1979, he had written *G D H Cole and Socialist Democracy* and in 1983 *British Socialism: Socialist Thought from the 1880s to the 1960s*. Wright was elected Labour MP for Cannock and Burntwood in 1992 and then represented the new constituency of Cannock Chase from 1997 to 2010, retiring on the grounds of ill health. He was chair of the Select Committee on Public Administration from 1999 to 2010 and chair of the House of Commons Reform committee, popularly known as the 'Wright' committee in 2008-9. On retirement, he took academics posts at University College London and Birkbeck College. He was chair of the Fabian Society in 1999-2000. His 31 books include a biography of R H

Tawney and *Values, Visions and Voices*, an 'anthology of the socialist tradition' edited with Gordon Brown in 1995. Wright is joint editor of *Political Quarterly*.

*"It is not enough for socialists to argue that Western societies need socialism. They also have to offer a kind of socialism that the citizens of these societies might be persuaded democratically to want. A socialism of this kind would need to be both attractive in principle and credible in practice. This would seem to imply a number of ingredients: firstly, that socialism is primarily (though not only) a moral theory, capable of generating a set of socialist values that can be articulated and applied in terms of a coherent public philosophy. In particular, this would involve a convincing account of a socialist conception of equality that genuinely enlarges freedom and autonomy, while also promoting community and fraternity. A socialism which takes its stand on this basis could not regard itself solely as the movement of a single class, or define itself simply in terms of the interests of a class, or define individuals only in terms of class categories, since this would be inconsistent with its general humanism."*



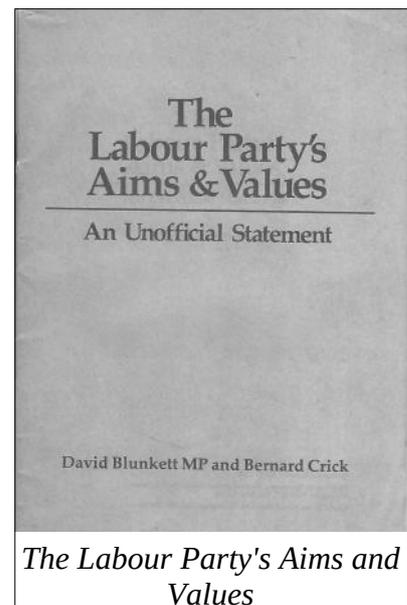
*"However, a credible and attractive socialism would need to have some further ingredients. Above all, perhaps, it would need to demonstrate its possession of a theory of political and economic organisation that avoided mere statism. It would need to show that it knew how to abolish the capitalist forms of the concentration of power and prosperity without thereby inaugurating a new form of socialist concentration. In terms of the economy, this would clearly involve an accommodation between plan and market, in the interests of both efficiency and consumer choice, and with a range of forms of enterprise and social ownership but with a preference for the small scale and the self-managing. In terms of the political system, it would involve the democratic diffusion of power in a system of socialist pluralism rooted in forms of territorial and functional devolution, in addition to effective general mechanisms to guarantee political accountability and civic freedom. Whenever and wherever possible, consistent with general social and economic objectives, it would be an 'enabling' state, redistributing power and property in ways designed to strengthen and extend individual and group autonomy."*

## OUR HISTORY 94

### **David Blunkett and Bernard Crick: *The Labour Party's Aims and Values: An Unofficial Statement* (1988)**

In 1985 the Labour Party National Executive Committee commissioned a statement of 'Principles and Beliefs'. The working party appointed to draft the document apparently met only once and then lapsed. Blunkett and Crick however believed that despite disputes over policy and strategy within the party, there was nevertheless widely shared common ground and that democratic socialism in Britain had a clear and distinctive doctrine. Their 'unofficial' statement was published as a pamphlet by Spokesman. Blunkett had been elected to Parliament in 1987, having for the previous seven years been leader of Sheffield Council. He was later to serve as Education secretary, Home Secretary and Work and Pensions Secretary between 1997 and 2005 and is currently a member of the House of Lords. Crick was professor of political science at Birkbeck College, University of London, having previously taught at Sheffield University. He published some thirty books *including In Defence of Politics*, originally published in 1962. He also wrote a Fabian pamphlet *Socialist Values and Time*, published in 1984. Crick died in 2008.

*"The Labour Party is proud to be a democratic socialist party. It is egalitarian, that is it believes in the equal worth of every human being; that we should treat each other always, whether friends or strangers, with equal consideration. But Labour also aims to be libertarian, open-minded and tolerant. We wish by democratic means to transform slowly but surely our present economically and socially divided society into a truly democratic community that treats all people as equal, women and men, black and white. Such a society would maximise popular participation and would stimulate the altruism in people not only the self-interest, aiming to reinforce the best in us all. Labour seeks not to do good to people by the state but to use the state to enable people to help themselves and those around them."*



*"The Labour Party from its origins rejected revolutionary socialism. But Labour's founders had ideals which if applied through free and democratic processes, example and discussion, applied step by step, patiently but with determination, would create a uniquely civilised society with a revolutionary change in social attitudes and values."*

*"To get workable and acceptable policies is the great task of any political party. But policies must be informed by values and a sense of direction not merely by short-term practicality and expediency. Otherwise policy dwindles into mere pragmatism, always reacting to events, never trying to shape them. Policy must never mean staying in office for the sake of staying in office or trying to win elections simply by reading the momentary popularity of issues on opinion polls. Rather we should try to persuade honestly and by the example of working models on a local level of what we democratic socialists see to be a free, more just and ultimately attainable good society."*

## **OUR HISTORY 95**

### **Michael Meacher: *Diffusing Power* (1992)**

Michael Meacher was MP for Oldham for 45 years from 1970 until his death in 2015. Before becoming an MP, he was an academic, teaching social administration at Essex and York universities. He was a junior minister in the Wilson and Callaghan governments. A member of Labour's shadow cabinet between 1983 and 1997, Meacher was an ally of Tony Benn and in 1983 stood unsuccessfully against Roy Hattersley for the deputy leadership. However, Blair did not offer Meacher a cabinet position after winning the 1997 election and instead he became a junior minister at the environment department before being sacked in 2003. Meacher then became a prominent critic of the Labour



*Michael Meacher*

government, notably in relation to the Iraq war. Meacher was also a prominent campaigner on environmental issues. In 2007 Meacher considered standing against Gordon Brown for the party leadership but stood down in favour of John McDonnell to avoid splitting the left vote. McDonnell however failed to obtain sufficient nominations to challenge Brown, who was therefore unopposed. In the 2015 leadership election, Meacher supported Jeremy Corbyn. In 1982, Meacher published *Socialism with a Human Face*, subtitled 'Political Economy of Britain in the 1980s.' *Diffusing Power*, subtitled 'The Key to Socialist Revival', was published ten years later.

*"The imagery of the 1940's welfare state is now very dated. It oozes with the aura of paternalism, bureaucracy, dependency and a world of claimants. It emphasises the availability of rights and benefits, often perceived pejoratively as 'handouts', while neglecting the reciprocity of responsibilities, duties and obligations. However*

valuable are the basic principles of a welfare society, an appeal to them can no longer by itself inspire victory at a general election, as Labour's experience in both 1987 and 1992 revealed."

*"If the left's ideology is to regain resonance and force, it must recapture the power to inspire. It must be, and be seen to be, a vision that releases new forces in society, unlocks individual and group energies now pent up, and releases hidden talents. Socialism is not merely, or even primarily, about protecting the weak. It is much more about extending widely the can-do mentality which under Thatcherite capitalism was the exclusive preserve of an entrepreneurial elite."*

*"Not least the new socialist ideology must generate excitement. Traditional socialism, while enormously worthy and full of good works, was also rather dull and stifling. A left vision which can sweep the country needs to develop a raw cutting edge. A genuine human politics cannot thrive purely on the cultivation of high ideals, let alone the suffocating demands of respectability; it must also exercise a crusading passion."*

*"Putting real power into the hands of the powerless and making that new power a foundation for an enhanced contribution to one's country offers a dynamic infinitely more resilient and meaningful than the Thatcherite consumerism of share handouts and capital discounts unconnected to the actual levers of power. Such a vision, as it was steadily implemented, would proliferate new cadres for socialism with the same ardour that Thatcher spawned her shock troops on the ground, the purveyors of private capital in every niche and cranny of the economy."*

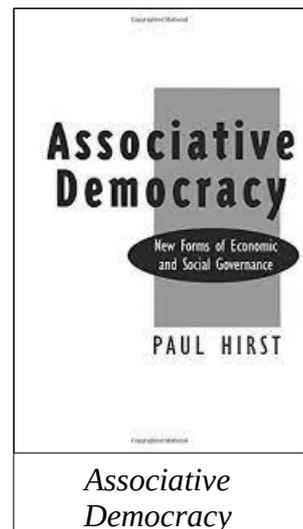
*"It involves a project on a scale of mobilisation never previously attempted by any socialist movement anywhere.... It represents a reversal of traditional top-down social democratic planning. It would progressively unleash bursts of undreamt-of activity where decentralisation of power would force government to adjust from the use of hierarchical controls to increasing acceptance of self-reliance and self-discipline. But as an agenda for the left, as a foundation for the drive to wrest political and ideological dominance from the nascent radical right in Britain and throughout Europe, the scope is awesome."*

## **OUR HISTORY 96**

### **Paul Hirst: Associative Democracy (1994)**

Paul Hirst was a sociologist and professor of social theory at Birkbeck College, London. In the 1970s and 1980s, he was a leading advocate of structural Marxism and together with Barry Hindess, wrote *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* in 1975.

He became a critic of Althusserian Marxism, referencing Wittgenstein, Foucault and the American logician Willard Quine. Changing the focus of his work to the issues of democratic governance, he published in 1990 *Representative Democracy and its Limits*. Moving towards a more pluralist approach, being attracted by the writings of British political pluralists, Figgis, Cole and Laski, Hirst developed the concept of 'associationism' as a basis for reviving socialism, as an alternative to state socialism and free market liberalism, drawing on some of the concepts and governance structures of the guild socialists and seeking to set out a third way combining the theories of Marx and Proudhon, though without acknowledging the libertarian socialist tradition within the First International advocated by the Belgian Cesar de Paepe. *Associative Democracy* in 1992, subtitled 'New Forms of Economic and Social Governance', was followed in 1997 by *From Statism to Pluralism*. His later work focused on globalisation and the built environment, publishing *Space and Power: Politics, War and Architecture* in 2005. Hirst was active in Charter 88 and contributed to the 'Open Democracy' website. Hirst died in 2003.



*"Associative democracy is not merely a doctrine of devolving power to voluntary associations, since it is accepted that not all social affairs can be administered in this way. Associations require a common framework of regulatory rules if they are to interact satisfactorily with one another and their members. Internal self-government needs to be answerable to minimum but non-optional standards to ensure that it is fair and does not infringe the freedom of individuals through unequal forms of authority or undue group pressure. Associations may need public funds to perform their functions, and must be answerable to the funding body for them. Further, there are certain affairs common to all members of society, and that cannot be devolved to the governance of associations chosen by their own members, such as the defence of the territory, certain police powers, certain environmental and public health provisions, and certain forms of compulsory control of individuals (such as mental health regulations)."*

*"The public power in any associationist system, even given federal decentralisation and the devolution of many functions to voluntary bodies, would not be a marginal entity. Whilst power should be as localised as possible, and where possible individuals should be able to choose the form of governance of most social activities they prefer, there must be a common public power. Such a power should be based on representative democratic principles, deriving its authority from a federal*

*constitution that prescribes and limits its powers. It would consist in a legislature elected on a territorial basis by universal suffrage and an independent judiciary appointed on legal merit, with autonomy to enforce the laws. Such a public power would be, in effect, a liberal constitutional state, but with limited functions. Associationalism and liberalism are not inherently in conflict. Indeed, given the self-government of most activities by voluntary associations and a federal state, liberalism would become a reality. At present classical liberal ideas are in contradiction with centralised, bureaucratic public service states that substitute state for society and circumscribe the 'private' sphere of individual liberty."*

OUR HISTORY 97

### **Hilary Wainwright: *Arguments for a New Left* (1994)**

Wainwright is a socialist feminist and political activist and is currently editor of *Red Pepper*. A sociology researcher at Durham University and then the Open University, Wainwright co-authored the *Workers Report on Vickers* with Hugh Benyon and then the *Lucas Plan* with David Elliot. In 1980, she was co-author of *Beyond the Fragments*. In 1982, she became deputy economic adviser to Ken Livingstone, the leader of the Greater London Council and founded the Popular Planning Unit. A member of the International Marxist Group, Wainwright was married



Hilary Wainwright

to the philosopher Roy Bhaskar, who was also involved in IMG. After the abolition of the GLC in 1986, Wainwright was attached to a number of research institutions including the Amsterdam based Transnational Institute, the LSE, Bradford Universities Peace Studies and the University of California. She was on the editorial board of *New Left Review*. In 1987, she wrote *Labour: A Tale of Two Parties*. After writing *Arguments for a New Left*, which is subtitled 'Answering the free market right' and draws significantly on Eastern European experience, Wainwright wrote a number of books on popular democracy and public service reform. She convened the new economics working group of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly from 1989 to 1994. Wainwright's most recent book, published in 2018, is *A New Politics from the Left*.

*"The networks of this new left aspire to be international: after all, they have developed out of efforts to track down and understand the new powers of*

*multinationals and inter-governmental institutions, and to share common experiences of struggle and organisation for which there are no national models."*

*"The sources of power that the movements could draw on in the early 1980's can only under special circumstances be mobilised. Frequently this new left politics is marginal and sometimes self-marginalising. The absence of a pan-European political framework contributes to their invisibility.... The result is not so much a democratic deficit, to be remedied over time, but a dangerous kind of democratic vacuum which is especially threatening at a time of growing economic insecurity for a large proportion of the population, who are therefore actively, and incoherently, seeking remedies but finding none within the existing political system. The far right in Western Europe has rallied its popular support under banners which invoke European Community institutions as well as foreign workers as threats to the future."*

*"The commitment which is common to the Western new left and those Eastern opportunists who have remained outside the state- namely, the commitment to democratic civic movements as necessary though not sufficient agencies of social change- has a unique importance in filling the democratic vacuum and undermining popular support for the far right. Such movements have the power to create the social associations of daily life by which people gain some power to shape their futures and a source of identity that is not defined by its hatred of others. The growth of such democratic civic associations, rooted amongst the most powerless and frustrated of society, will be a base from which the new authoritarianism and popular racism spreading across Europe could be countered. At present, however, the social base of democratic social and radical trade union movements is limited. There will need to be a concerted effort to extend that base from that of a minority counter-culture, to a political force for democracy and social security."*

*"The politics of democratic social and trade union movements provides a basis. If they were to develop they would represent a new kind of left; in which a liberalism that had moved beyond individualism, co-operated and contested with a form of socialism that no longer relied primarily on the nation state."*

## **OUR HISTORY 98**

### **Tony Blair: *The Third Way* (1998)**

It is perhaps open to question why Blair's pamphlet is included in a series entitled 'Our History' as most readers of this publication will not consider Tony Blair to be part of a libertarian democratic socialist tradition. However as Blair's interpretation of a liberal centrist social democracy was dominant within the Labour Party and to a

large extent British political culture for nearly twenty years, given the column which is the basis for this Occasional Publication had over the last fifteen years adopted a broad pluralist approach to the history of socialist thought, it seemed inappropriate to ignore Blair, however much we might wish to do so. Blair, Labour Party leader from 1994 and Prime Minister from 1997 to 2007, was not a theorist. Some would question whether he was a socialist or is even a social democrat. Relative to his predecessors, Blair actually wrote little, other than his autobiography, *A Journey*, published in 2010. Blair only published one other substantive book, *New Britain: My Vision for a Young Country*, published in 1996, before he became Prime Minister.

*The Third Way* was published as a pamphlet by the Fabian Society. Blair owed much of his approach to the writings of Anthony Giddens, the sociologist and director of the London School of Economics, who published *Beyond Left and Right* 1994 and then *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* in 1998. Giddens is now a member of the House of Lords. For his thinking on the 'Big Society', Blair drew on the work of the Scottish philosopher, John Macmurray, author of *Persons in Relation*.



Tony Blair

Blair was not the inventor of the 'third way concept', a term also used by the Austrian Marxist, Otto Bauer, for whom the 'third way' was between Stalinist communism and traditional social democracy. Harold Macmillan, Conservative Prime Minister between 1957 and 1963, in 1938 had published a book entitled *The Middle Way*, though this work in supporting a programme of nationalisation to support economic regeneration, can be seen as standing to the left of Blair's 'third way'. The pamphlet does not reference any previous socialist writers, not even the early generation of revisionists such as Anthony Crosland. Blair does not refer to 'socialism' or 'socialists', preferring the term 'progressive centre-left', a term which would incorporate most liberals.

*"The 'Third Way' is to my mind the best label for the new politics which the progressive centre-left is forging in Britain and beyond. The Third Way stands for a modernised social democracy, passionate in its commitment to social justice and the goals of the centre-left, but flexible, innovative and forward-looking in the means to achieve them. It is founded on the values which have guided progressive politics for more than a century – democracy, liberty, justice, mutual obligation and internationalism. But it is a third way because it moves decisively beyond an Old Left preoccupied by state control, high taxation and producer interests and a New Right*

*treating public investment, and often the very notions of 'society' and collective endeavour, as evils to be undone."*

*"My vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is of a popular politics reconciling themes which in the past have wrongly been regarded as antagonistic – patriotism and internationalism; rights and responsibilities; the promotion of enterprise and the attack on poverty and discrimination, The Left should be proud of its achievements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century not least universal suffrage, a fairer sharing of taxation and growth, and greater improvement in working conditions and in welfare, health and educational services. But we still have far to go to build the open, fair and prosperous society to which we aspire."*

*"The Third Way is not an attempt to split the difference between Right and Left. It is about traditional values in a changed world. And it draws vitality from using the two great streams of left-of-centre thought – democratic socialism and liberals – whose divorce this century did so much to weaken progressive politics across the West. Liberals asserted the primacy of individual liberty in the market economy; social democrats promoted social justice with the state as its main agent. There is necessary conflict between the two, accepting as we now do that state power is one means to achieve our goals, but not the only one and emphatically not an end in itself."*

## **OUR HISTORY 99**

### **David Marquand: *Decline of the Public* (2004)**

Marquand is an academic and former Labour MP. Son of the Labour MP, Hilary Marquand, who was a Minister in Attlee's post-war governments, David Marquand was MP for Ashfield from 1966 to 1977, when he resigned to take up the position of chief advisor to Roy Jenkins as President of the European Commission. Marquand joined the Social Democrat Party, sitting on its national executive and standing unsuccessfully for Parliament, and then joining the Liberal Democrats on the merger of the SDP and the Liberal Party. He



re-joined the Labour Party in 1995 following Tony Blair's election to the leadership. Becoming more critical of Blair's government, he signed the founding statement of the left-wing group Compass in 2003. In 2016 it was reported that he had joined Plaid Cymru. Marquand has taught political science at several universities and between 1996 and 2002 was principal of Mansfield College, Oxford. In 1977 Marquand published what is the classic biography of Ramsay Macdonald. This was followed in

1988 by *The Unprincipled Society*, *The New Reckoning: Capitalism, States and Citizens* in 1997, *The Progressive Dilemma: From Lloyd George to Blair* in 1999 and the *Decline of the Public* in 2004, subtitled 'The Hollowing-out of Citizenship'. He has contributed to a wide range of books and pamphlets, most focusing on British and European politics and some tracking changes in Labour Party politics over the last forty years. In 2014, he published *Mammon's Kingdom*, subtitled 'An Essay on Britain Now', which was an excoriating attack on Britain's political culture.

*"Towards a New Public Philosophy:*

- 1. A vigorous and extensive public domain is fundamental to a civilised society, to crucially important forms of human flourishing, and, not least, to democratic citizenship.*
- 2. Belief in the possibility of public interest, distinct from private interests, is fundamental to the public domain. public discourse based on that belief.*
- 3. In the public domain, citizen rights trump both market power and the ties of family, friendship, neighbourhood and connection.*
- 4. The public domain is, in a special sense, the domain of trust. Trust relationships are fundamental to it: public trust is symbiotically connected with the contestations, debates and negotiations, and the value of equity and citizenship, which are of its essence.*
- 5. It follows that the public domain must be protected from the ever-present threat of incursion by the market and private domains.*
- 6. In our time, the chief vehicles for market incursion are the pervasive notion that the public domain institutions should be managed as though they were market institutions, and the rhetoric of consumerism.*
- 7. The rule of law, embodied in an independent authoritative judiciary, and a disinterested non-partisan professional civil service, have crucial parts to play in protecting the public domain from such incursions.*
- 8. The goods of the public domain must not be treated as commodities or surrogate commodities. Performance indicators designed to mimic the indicators of the market domain are therefore out of place in the public domain, and do more harm than good.*
- 9. By the same token, the language of buyer and seller, producer and consumer, does not belong in the public domain; nor do the relationships which this language implies. People are consumers only in the market domain; in the public domain, they are citizens. Attempts to force these relationships into a market mould undermine the service ethic which is the true guarantor of quality in the public domain. In doing so, they impoverish the entire society.*

10. *The search for competitiveness - in practice, for higher productivity, achieved by substituting capital for labour- which is proper to the market domain, is also out of place in the public domain.*

11. *Professions, professionalism and professional ethic are inextricably linked to the public domain. This is most obviously true of public-sector professions, which serve the public interest by definition; but it is also true of private-sector professionals, whose duty is to serve the wider public interest as well as the private interests of their own clients.*

12. *To carry out their duties, professionals must have the autonomy to exercise their judgement as they see fit. This means that professional performance cannot be assessed, or professional career prospects determined, solely or even mainly by market criteria or criteria that mimic those of the market place.*

13. *Wrongly used, state power can do as much damage to the public domain as market power. To guard against that danger, constitutional checks and balances supported by strong and vigorous intermediate institutions, standing between the state and the individual, are indispensable."*

## **OUR HISTORY 100**

### **New Worlds for Old: Chartist Manifesto (2006)**

This manifesto was published in *Chartist* magazine, November/December 2006.

#### **Socialism for the Twenty-First Century**

1. Capitalism is still the dominant global economic system. Laissez faire capitalism only exists in textbooks. The biggest capitalist economies, the United States and Japan, practice high levels of state intervention and protection for native corporations. The European Union is caught between an open market philosophy and trade barriers. The long boom and growth for most western economies during the 1990s will result in recession and slowdown as long as night follows day. The huge credit bubble cannot continue indefinitely. Thanks to the expansion of globalisation, war, poverty and revolutions remain prominent features of the world landscape. Global warming and environmental degradation walk hand in hand with unregulated profiteering.

2. At any one time at least 20 military conflicts rage across the world with war in the Middle East being the paramount international flash point. While Chartist supports the right of national groups to a degree of political autonomy, the right to self-determination, including for Palestine, Israel, the Kurds, Sunnis and Shias in Iraq, is conditional on respect for the rights of other national groups, especially where there is no clear territorial separation. We campaign for an international socialism, and for structures for world governance and dispute arbitration as a goal for a humane, egalitarian and democratic world.

3. Chartist wants a proportional electoral system where every vote counts equally. We believe active, democratic political parties are a crucial vehicle for social and economic change but recognise they must be inextricably linked to extra-parliamentary movements to effect a fundamental redistribution of wealth and power. Economic and social justice is a prerequisite of a truly democratic society.

4. Chartist is an independent socialist journal. It is not affiliated to any political party. While some members of the editorial board are members of the Labour Party, others are not. This has enabled Chartist to be part of a broader political dialogue across the left. While we cannot ignore debates within the Labour Party and within government, Chartist has sought to have a wider focus. One of Chartist's strengths has been its recognition of a range of socialist traditions. Chartist has often sought to remind its readers of the importance of socialist history and principles – an important role given we have a Government and a wider Labour Party which is increasingly both unprincipled and ahistorical.

5. The basic position of Chartist is that it supports a socialist governance based on economic and political equality. In opposing authoritarian centralism both within government and political party structures, it supports economic and political power being operated at the most appropriate level. It therefore supports democratically elected and accountable forms of governance at international, national, regional and local level. Chartist recognises that the main role of government is to provide the social and economic infrastructure which cannot be organised by individuals or groups of individuals and to provide a framework for the operation of 'civil society'. Chartist accepts that a central role of government is redistributive – to use the wealth of individuals and corporate bodies for the benefit of the population as a whole. Chartist recognises the diversity of both politics and culture and that governance is necessary in both protecting diversity and individual rights, while ensuring that rights cannot be exercised in away that denies the rights of others.

### **Private Wealth and Public Services**

6. Chartist therefore supports the limitation of personal wealth and the operation of a progressive taxation system. The Government therefore should introduce higher rates of taxation for households on higher incomes and limit the accrual of personal and household wealth through both inheritance and the appreciation of land and property assets. The Government should focus on policies of wealth and income redistribution rather than incentivising personal and household asset appreciation. The Government's focus on increasing the number of households who are homeowners through use of tax resources as incentives represents an unacceptable bias towards middle income households at the expense of the households on lowest incomes. It also makes the economic fortunes of even more households dependent on market

forces outside their control. The Government has a short memory. One product of market cycles is negative equity and mortgage default repossessions.

7. Chartist supports the provision of essential services and social infrastructure on a publicly accountable and publicly managed basis. Local government needs to be re-empowered and made more democratic. People will only re-engage in politics if local government, as well as regional government, is seen as both having a positive role in relation to them and is seen as open to influence through appropriate democratic channels. Local councils should regain control of education and housing services. They should also have a degree of control over health, police and local transport services, which serve more than a single authority area. Regional bodies required to support cross regional services should also be directly elected. To ensure the required degree of democratic accountability and stability of governance, a system of annual but partial elections is advocated, with representatives serving three-year terms, with a third being elected each year. All forms of government should be operated on a committee structure, without Mayoral or executive structures, with all representatives being paid an equal salary and having equal rights within the organisational body.

8. All utilities, transport, water, gas and electricity should be provided through bodies under public control. Any services provided by private sector organisations should be on a contractual basis to the public body as client. Use of the private sector to provide public services should be limited to specific circumstances determined by the public sector body where the public sector does not itself have the specialist capacity. The profit motive is not a relevant matter in the provision of public services. Cost-efficiency can be assured by public control, audit and regulation. Chartist would therefore support the reintegration of private education and health services within a framework of public control, accountability and equal access. QUANGOs should be replaced by accountable public bodies. Use of consultants and agencies should not be a way of avoiding pay and conditions applicable to directly employed staff, nor a mechanism for exaggerated salaries for managers.

9. The principles of accountability and individual rights also need to be central to the judicial and policing systems. The principles of trial by jury and strict limits to pre-trial detention should be operated without exemptions. There is no basis for using the justification of terrorist threats to weaken these essential safeguards. Accountable and democratic governance, which is accepted by the vast majority of the population, continues to be the best defence against terrorism. Authoritarianism and secrecy are the terrorists' greatest recruiter.

10. It is recognised that economic power and wealth has to be shared between public and private sectors. It has also to be acknowledged that with the development of international corporate bodies, there are severe limitations on the ways in which a single government can regulate and control the operation of multinational capitalism.

Maintaining a balance between supporting employment growth and limiting the growth in economic inequality requires a range of regulatory and taxation interventions at international as well as at local, regional and national level. The current position of strong economic growth leading to greater inequities in income and wealth is not however sustainable and has created a culture of envy and social marginalisation where the lottery and reality TV shows have replaced education as the main route a 'working class' person can achieve economic and social advancement.

## **A Socialist International Policy**

11. In international policy, Chartism supports the central role of international governance, through the United Nations, its associated bodies and continental bodies such as the African Union and the European Union. While as a major economic power, the UK has international responsibilities, it is no longer a colonial power and any interventions in civil disputes or wars both between and within other sovereign states, should be as a contributor to a UN force and under UN authority. While the UN should be reformed to remove the veto powers of the Security Council and to ensure continental representation on its governing body, the UN remains the pre-eminent international body and its decisions should not be disregarded by any government, including the UK government.

12. The Government should terminate its 'special relationship' with the US Government, should not seek to categorise other countries as allies or enemies and should consider its relationship with other countries in terms of the merits of the individual case in question and within the frameworks established by the UN. The UK should cease the export of arms to any body other than to a UN controlled force. The UK defence forces should only operate in other countries where they are acting as part of a UN controlled military intervention. We would support a major programme of arms industry conversion and retraining. The UK government should seek to transfer any residual governance responsibilities in Iraq to local political control, or where this is not yet feasible, to agencies of the UN. The UK should focus on supporting international development through its aid programme rather than on military interventions. Where development cannot be achieved without political control and security, such interventions should be through the UN. Any intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, for example in the case of threat of civil war or genocide should be through the United States rather than through unilateral action by individual states. This requires the UN to have a significant intervention force on standby available for immediate deployment.

13. An accountable, transparent, democratic European Union on a social democratic model, would provide the basis from which to develop these international goals with preferential trading relations being provided for developing nations and a foreign

policy independent of the USA. Significant reforms are required to governance of the EU to increase its internal democracy and its accountability to the electorate of its member states. Powers should not be transferred from democratic nation states to undemocratic pan-national bodies. We stand for the free movement of all labour within the EU and a humane, non-racist immigration policy, with protection of employment rights of non-nationals as well as nationals. We should never close our doors to asylum seekers and refugees and recognise that immigration plays a positive economic, social and cultural role in the development of British society.

14. Chartist stands for the extension of rights and freedoms to the disadvantaged, exploited and oppressed. We support the UN Declaration of Human Rights and its incorporation into British law. We stand for the extension of active democracy in all spheres of society and politics including the workplace and in the social relations of the family

We support the abolition of the monarchy and replacement by a republican head of state. We support the replacement of the House of Lords with a predominantly elected second chamber. We have consistently campaigned for equality for women in economy and society to include equal pay for work of equal value, the right of women to control their own bodies, fertility, decisions about marriage and for equal representation in the corridors of power.

### **A tolerant and diverse democracy**

15. Chartist supports the practical extension of equal rights to all those experiencing disadvantage and discrimination because of their gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability. The emancipation of women worldwide stands in parallel with the freedom of workers from exploitation and is integral to the creation of democratic socialism. We support freedom of religious belief. However, we oppose any religion or religions in general being given any favoured position within the state. We therefore support separation of state and church. No religious group should be empowered by the state to impose its faith on others. The state must be neutral between faiths and therefore secular.

16. In promoting collectivism, we oppose selfish individualism, not human individuality. No individual should be disbarred from full participation in civil society and the political structure of the country, except where removed from society through imprisonment for conviction for crimes of violence against other persons which demonstrate that they are a significant threat to civil society. All individuals should be encouraged to actively participate in civil society. Effective citizenship involves responsibilities as well as rights.

17. We stand for worker's democracy, be it in the factory, office, school, supermarket or farm. Producers and providers should have a powerful voice in the decision-

making process mediated by the needs of service consumers and stakeholders. A Freedom of Information Act should apply both to government, society and corporations which should no longer be able to hide behind the mask of company law to deny information to their employees.

18. Chartist recognises the fundamental threat to all life posed by climate change and environmental degradation. We support the principle of the polluter pays, the extension of green taxes, investment in renewable energy sources, recycling and reuse of materials.

19. The 21<sup>st</sup> century should be an age when technology is harnessed to enhance the life of all people and enrich that which makes us human: art, science, culture, politics, and the pursuit of happiness. We need to establish a new enlightened work-life balance. No one should have to work more than 35 hours or a five-day week. We welcome flexible working arrangements, the extension of maternity and paternity leave, job sharing, sabbaticals, the extension of the minimum wage and the introduction of a maximum wage. We support the EU maximum 48 hour working directive and call for all member states, including the UK, to implement this legislation.

## **Towards Socialism**

20. The objectives and policies set out in this manifesto are neither extreme nor utopian. They would have been viewed as cautious, even reformist, by many socialists over the last hundred years. They are idealist but nevertheless still practical. They are based on the reassertion of the fundamental principles of socialism, while recognising the changed context in which they should be applied. While Chartist may have a relatively limited role within the UK left, never mind within the international socialist movement, we have an important role as an independent advocate of socialist ideas and can help to set the framework for the debate on a more socialist future, at least within our readership and networks. This restatement of Chartist's long-term policy objectives could assist to broaden our influence, and to avoid misinterpretations or misattributions. We need to be a beacon of light in a context which is increasingly darkened by a failure of collective memory as well as abandonment of the collectivist principle. Our objective should be not just Beyond Blair but Towards Socialism.

## APPENDIX

The first 50 columns from *Chartist* were published as *Our History: Roots of the British Socialist Movement* (Socialist History Society Occasional Publication No.34) in 2014. The columns were:

1. THE PEOPLES CHARTER 1838
2. THOMAS PAINE Rights of Man 1795
3. ROWLAND DETROISIER Moral and Political Instruction among the Working Classes 1834
4. CHARLES SOUTHWELL Socialism Made Easy 1845
5. BRONTERRE O'BRIEN Speech on Anniversary of Robespierre's death 1853
6. WILLIAM LOVETT Social and Political Morality 1853
7. W J LINTON English Republic 1851
8. EDMUND BEALES National Reform League address 1865
9. GEORGE HOLYOAKE Working Class Representation 1868
10. LAND AND LABOUR LEAGUE MANIFESTO 1869
11. THOMAS SMITH Nottingham IWMA Manifesto 1872
12. FREDERICK MAXSE The Causes of Social Revolt 1873
13. JOSEPH COWEN Newcastle speech 1874
14. JOHN SKETCHLEY Principles of Social Democracy 1879
15. HENRY GEORGE The Land Question 1881
16. HENRY HYNDMAN England for All 1881
17. FREDERIC HARRISON Speech for the Anti-Aggression League 1882
18. GAVIN CLARK A Plea for the Nationalisation of Land 1882
19. JOHN CARRUTHERS Communal and Commercial Economy 1883
20. WILLIAM MORRIS Art and Socialism 1884
21. EDWARD CARPENTER England's Ideal 1884
22. MICHAEL DAVITT Leaves from a Prison Diary 1885
23. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN The Radical Programme 1885
24. ADAM BIRKMEYRE Practicable Socialism 1885
25. ERNEST BELFORT BAX The Religion of Socialism 1886
26. CHARLOTTE WILSON What Socialism Is 1886
27. JOSEPH LANE An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto 1887
28. ANNIE BESANT Radicalism and Socialism 1887
29. T R THRELFALL How the Classes Rule the Masses 1887
30. HENRY CHAMPION The Theories of Socialism 1887
31. FABIAN SOCIETY Manifesto 1884
32. JOHN MAHON A Labour Programme 1888
33. CHARLES DILKE A Radical Programme 1890
34. ELEANOR MARX May Day Speech 1890
35. MORRISON DAVIDSON Politics for the People 1892
36. ANDREAS SCHEU What's to be Done? 1892

37. STEWART HEADLAM Christian Socialism 1892
38. WILLIAM M THOMPSON The Rise of English Democracy 1892
39. TOM MANN What the ILP is Driving at 1894
40. ROBERT BLATCHFORD Merrie England 1894
41. JOHN RICHARDSON How it Can be Done. Constructive Socialism 1894
42. HERBERT BURROWS The New Party: Its Principles, its Hopes and its Ideals 1895
43. JOHN KENWORTHY From Bondage to Brotherhood 1894
- 44/45. METROPOLITAN RADICAL FEDERATION Radical Programme 1897
46. ALEX THOMPSON The Referendum and Initiative in Practice 1899
47. WILLIAM SANDERS The Political Re-organisation of the People 1902
48. JOHN MACKAIL Socialism and Politics 1903
49. ISABELLA FORD Women and Socialism 1904
50. KEIR HARDIE From Serfdom to Socialism 1907

Printed copies are still available from the SHS but an eBook version can be downloaded at <https://www.chartist.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Our-History-50-eBook.pdf>

## How to join the Socialist History Society

The Society takes an interest in every aspect of human history from the earliest social formations to modern society, its culture and political activities. We encourage anyone with an interest in our history to join us and participate in our activities. The Society is particularly interested in the struggles of labour, women, progressive and peace movements throughout the world, as well as the movements and achievements of working class communities, colonial peoples, black people, and other oppressed groups seeking social justice, human dignity and liberation.

*Socialist History* is the journal of the Socialist History Society. Members receive two copies of the journal per year, all the pamphlets in the society's 'Occasional Publications', and the society newsletter.

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More details from: [http://www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/?page\\_id=35](http://www.socialisthistorysociety.co.uk/?page_id=35)

## Chartist

Chartist is the bi-monthly political magazine of the democratic left. In honouring the Chartists of the 19th century, our idea of democratic socialism is as much about the political movement and means of mobilisation used to advance political ideas as it is about the ideas themselves. Chartist seeks to provide a space for those who subscribe to this broad ideal.

More details from: <https://www.chartist.org.uk/>



# TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIALISM IN BRITAIN

by  
Duncan Bowie

British socialist activists should know more about the history of the movement. One of the purposes of the Socialist History Society is to provide this knowledge in an accessible form. This Occasional Publication is a contribution to this objective and comprises 50 short extracts from key socialist writings from the 20th century, each with a brief commentary. These were originally published in the Our History column in the bi-monthly socialist journal, *Chartist*, over the last seven years. They are drawn from a range of traditions within British socialism, from the Communist and Suffragette Sylvia Pankhurst and anarchist April Carter to Tony Blair. Some authors are well known like Ramsay MacDonald and R H Tawney, for example, others such as Zelda Kahan and Emily Townshend less so. This OP is a successor to the *Roots of the British socialist movement*, which comprises fifty extracts from radical and socialist writings of the 19th century, also edited by Duncan Bowie, which was published by the SHS in 2014.

**Duncan Bowie** is co-chair of the Socialist History Society and for the last 15 years has been reviews editor and written a history column for the socialist journal *Chartist*, on which this pamphlet is based. Now semi-retired, he is an honorary research associate at the Bartlett School of Planning, UCL. His books include *Politics, Planning and Homes in a World City* (Routledge 2010); *Radical Solutions to the Housing Supply Crisis* (Policy Press 2017); *The Radical and Socialist Tradition in British Planning* (Routledge 2017); *Reform and Revolt in the City of Dreaming Spires* (University of Westminster Press 2018) and *Two Hundred Years of Dulwich Radicalism* (Community Languages 2021).

The first 50 of Duncan's history columns for *Chartist* were published as *Roots of the British Socialist Movement* (Socialist History Society: Occasional Publication 34 2014), Duncan has also contributed to a number of other SHS Occasional Publications.

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SOCIETY**